Mājas Draugs

3. GADS APRĪLIS, 1952 4./ 26./ NR.

JA KRISTUS NAV AUGŠĀMCĒLIES, TAD VELTĪGA IR MŪSU SLUDINĀŠANA
Mākslinieka ANŠA BĒRZIŅA zīmējums 1.Kor. vēst.15.nod.14.pantam

NENOPLĒŠAMAIS TEMPLIS

"Jēzus atbildēja: Noplēsiet šo templi, un es to trijās dienās atkal uzcelšu. Tad jūdi sacīja: Četrdesmit sešus gadus šis templis ir taisīts, un tu to gribi uzcelt trijās dienās? Bet viņš runāja par savas miesas templi."
(Jāņa ev. 2, 19 - 21)

NOPLĒSIET šo templi, un es to trijās dienās atkal uzcelšu. - Kas par vārdiem, kas par pārliecības spēku! Kurš cilvēks gan tādus vārdus drīkst sacīt? Uzcelt trijās dienās templi, kas celts septiņus gadus, pie kā strādājuši tūkstošiem cilvēku! Vai tā nav pārdrošība, lai neteiktu vairāk? Trijās dienās? ! Tik pat labi varētu sacīt: "Noplēsiet šo pasauli, un es to atkal uzcelšu trijās dienās..." Un kādēļ gan lai viņi to noplēstu? Vai šāda runa jau pati par sevi nebija sodama? Vai templis nebija Dieva nams, Dievam celts, kurā Dievs mājoja? Kur vissvētākajā vietā bija Dieva bausļības galdiņi, kurus Viņš savam kalpam Mozum bija Sīnajā devis? Kā Jēzus drīkstēja teikt: "Noplēsiet to"? Vai viņš nebija tāds pat cilvēks, kā visi citi? Vai viņa tēvs nebija Jāzeps, Viņa māte Marija, visiem zināmi ļaudis?

Bet Jēzus bija runājis par savas miesas templi. Un Viņš zināja, ka viņi to noplēsīs. Un viņi to noplēsa, noplēsa Lielajā piektdienā, Golgatā. Noplēsa vienīgo, patieso Dieva namu. Skaistāko, dārgāko kāds zemes virsū bijis. Dzīvo templi, kurā Dievs pats mājoja un Viņa pilnība, kurā nebija nekāda trūkuma, vai nepilnības. Ko Dievs bija cēlis un cilvēkiem devis, lai caur Viņu tie nāktu pie patiesības un gaismas. Bet cilvēki to nepazina, un viņiem tas nepatika. Tiem labāk patika Bābeles tornis, ko tie cēla un vēl tagad ceļ, arvien augstāk un augstāk - pelēku, aukstu akmens celtni, bez dzīvības, gara un dvēseles. Tiem labāk patika savā tornī, nekā dzīvajā Dieva namā.

Un tā viņi noplēsa šo templi, noārdīja līdz pamatiem. Apraka, noslēpa tumšā klinšu alā, lai neviens to vairs neatrastu un augšā neceltu un viņi varētu netraucēti pēc sava prāta darīt, celt savu torni tālāk - ar vergiem, nabagiem un apspiestu cilvēku dvēselēm. Lielajā piektdienā tie gavilēja, smējās, pirkstiem rādīja: "Redzi, templa noplēsējs! Ja esi tik varens, kāp zemē no krusta, nāc ārā no kapa - un uzcel atkal savu templi, kā sacīji, trijās dienās! Varbūt tad mēs tajā dzīvosim.

Un Viņš to uzcēla.

Trešās dienas agrā rītā, gaismai austot, Jēzus cēlās augšā un iznāca no kapa. Gan neviens no tumsības kalpiem to nebija ticējis. Tie krita pie zemes, rokām aizklāja seju, bēga, slēpās, līda klinšu alās. Cēlās augšā Dieva dēls, Dieva vispēcīgā radītāja gara spēkā, saulei lēcot pār jaunu zemi un pie jaunas debess. Uzcēla Kristus templi - skaistāku, brīnišķīgāku kā agrāk. Mūžīgu, nemirstīgu, nekad vairs nenoplēšamu, lai caur Viņu visi, kas Viņam tic, dzīvotu un augšām celtos pēdējā dienā. Par neizmērīgu prieku un gandarījumu visiem labiem gariem un cilvēkiem, cietējiem, saitēs saistītiem un pie zemes noliektiem. Uzcēla templi, kas gaišs mirdz pasaules augstajā kalnā, lai tiem, kas zemes ielejā, nekad nezustu ticība gaismas un dzīvības uzvarai. Un lai šai ticībā tie vienmēr par jaunu smeltos sev spēku izturēt, pastāvēt, palikt uzticīgiem līdz galam.

Nekas, itin nekas nevarēja šo Dieva glābšanas darbu kavēt. Ne farizēju meli, ne romiešu ieroči, ne pašas elles draudi un lāsti. Viņu rīcība šķiet kā maleniešu darbošanās, kas jauno domes namu ceļot, logus bija aizmirsuši ielikt...

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Draugi! Nava varenāka un nozīmīgāka notikuma pasaules vēsturē, kā Kristus augšāmcelšanās Lieldienās. Nava notikuma ar līdzīgu ietekmi cilvēces vēstures gaitā, tās stiprināšanā, garīgā augšup celšanā, īpaši grūtos bēdu un ciešanu laikos, kā Lieldienu notikums. Ir mums bijuši lieli cilvēki, gara milži, kas atstājuši lielu mantojumu cilvēcei, kultūrai, bet paši viņi miruši, pa daļai arī jau aizmirsti. Nava neviena, kas būtu teicis: Es nemiršu! - un viņš nebūtu miris. Kristus ir vienīgais, pirmais starp mirušiem, kas augšāmcēlies, daudziem parādījies un drīkst sacīt: "Es esmu augšāmcelšanās un dzīvība, kas man tic, tas dzīvos kaut arī tas mirtu".

"Vai tu tam tici"? jautāja Jēzus Martai? Un viņa atbildēja: "Es ticu, Kungs, Tu esi Kristus, dzīvā Dieva Dēls." Tā lai arī mēs sakām: "Mēs ticam, Kungs, Tu esi Kristus, dzīvā Dieva Dēls, pasaules Pestītājs!" Jo ticēt ir labāk, kā neticēt, apliecināt labāk, nekā noliegt, dzīvot labāk, nekā mirt. Tādēļ mēs ticam. Jēzus dzīve, nāve un augšāmcelšanās, Viņa vārdi un darbi mums šo ticību modina, stiprina un apliecina ik gadus par jaunu.

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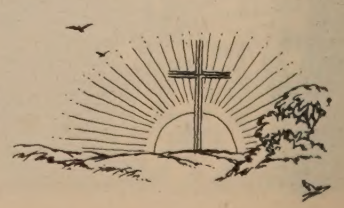
Noplēsiet šo templi, un es to trijās dienās atkal uzcelšu. - Dievs to uzcēla Jēzū Kristū, Viņa draudzē un baznīcā, kas celta no dzīviem, dārgiem akmeņiem. Un ir atkal, kas grib to noplēst, un līdz ar to visu kristīgo pasauli un kultūru. Komūnisti, anarchisti, nihilisti materiālisti, kapitālisti, eksistenciālisti, pesimisti - plēš ko var un cik var. Plēš un ārda ar meliem, viltu, naudu, varu, karu, lāstiem un solījumiem!

Bet viņi to nenoplēsīs!

"Viņi netiks cauri!" - kā ap. Pāvils saka, un kā reiz Francijai liktenīgā brīdī sacīja arī maršals Fošs, pie Verdenas. Netiks cauri, nenoplēsīs! Jo šoreiz templis celts cilvēku rokām nenoplēšams. "Tas kungs tās tumsības, gan bargs tas izraugas, bet ko mums padarīs, Dievs viņu nosodij's. Viens vārdiņš to spēj padzīt."

Tā ir mūsu ticība - un tā ir labāka, kā viņu neticība. Katrā ziņā! Ticība, kas mums šodien vajadzīga, ticība, kas dod spēku, ticība, kas arī mūsu cietējai tautai un visai cietējai pasaulei dos spēku izturēt, pastāvēt un sagaidīt augšāmcelšanās rītu.



PRĀVESTS KR. VALTERS.

LIELĀS PIEKTAS STĀSTS

(MĀJU DIEVVĀRDIEM)

''UN TŪLĪT RĪTA AGRUMĀ AUGSTIE PRIESTEĢI AR VECAJIEM UN RAKSTU MĀCĪTĀJIEM UN VISA AUGSTĀ TIESA TAISĪJA SPRIEDUMU UN SASĒJUŠI JĒZU, LIKA TO AIZVEST UN NODEVA VIŅU PILĀTAM...BET PILĀTS TIEM SACĪJA: KO TAD VIŅŠ ĻAUNA DARĪJIS? BET TIE...BRĒCA: SIT VIŅU KRUSTĀ! BET PILĀTS, GRIBĒDAMS ĻAUDĪM IZTAPT...JĒZU LIKA ŠAUST UN NODEVA, LAISĪSTU KRUSTĀ. BET KAĢAVĪRI VIŅU NOVEDA PILĪ, TAS IR PĀRVALDNIEKA NAMĀ, UN SASAUCA VISU PULKU.UN TIE VIŅAM APVELK PURPURA METELI, UN NOPINUŠI ĒRKŠĶU KRONI, LIKA VIŅAM TO GALVĀ UN SĀKA VIŅU SVEICINĀT: SVEIKS, JŪDU ĶĒNIŅ!...UN KAD TIE VIŅU BIJA APSMĒJUŠI, TAD VIŅAM NOVILKA PURPURA MĒTELI UN VIŅAM APVILKA VIŅA PAŠA DRĒBES UN VIŅU AIZVEDA, LAI SISTU KRUSTĀ. UN TIE PIESPIEDA KĀDU, KAS NO LAUKA NĀKDAMS, GAĢĀM GĀJA,SĪMANI NO ĶIRENES, ALEKSANDRA UN RUFA TĒVU, LAI TAS NESTU VIŅA KRUSTU. UN TIE VIŅU NOVEDA GOLGATĀ, KAS IR TULKOTS: PIERES VIETA...UN TIE VIŅU SITA KRUSTĀ UN IZDALĪJA SAVĀ STARPĀ VIŅA DRĒBES, MEZDAMI KAULIŅUS PAR TĀM, KO KURŠ DABŪTU. UN TĀ BIJA TREŠĀ STUNDA, KAD VIŅU SITA KRUSTĀ...UN TIE, KAS GĀJA GAĢĀM, VIŅU ZAIMOJA...TĀPAT ARĪ AUGSTIE PRIESTEĢI AR RAKSTU MĀCĪTĀJI VIŅU APSMĒJA UN SACĪJA: CITUS VIŅŠ IR PESTĪJIS UN SEVI PAŠU VIŅŠ NEVAR PESTĪT...UN AP SESTO STUNDU PALIKA TUMŠS PĀR VISU ZEMI LĪDZ DEVĪTAI STUNDAI.UN AP DEVĪTO STUNDU JĒZUS STIPRĀ BALSĪ BRĒCA, SAUKDAMS:ELOI, ELOI, LAMA ZABACHTANI! TAS IR TULKOTS: MANS DIEVS, MANS DIEVS, KĀPĒC TU MANI ESI ATSTĀJIS? ...UN NOMIRA. UN PRIEKŠKARS DIEVNAMĀ PĀRPLĪSA DIVOS GABALOS NO AUGŠAS LĪDZ ZEMEI. BET VIRSNIEKS, KAS TUR KLĀT STĀVĒJA VIŅAM PRETĪ, REDZĒDAMS, KA VIŅŠ TĀDĀ VEIDĀ BIJA MIRIS, SACĪJA: PATIESI, ŠIS CILVĒKS BIJA DIEVA DĒLS.'' (MK. 15. NODAĻA)

TAS KUNGS
TANĪ NAKTĪ, KAD TAS TAPA NODOTS,
ĶĒMA MAIZI, PATEICĀS, PĀRLAUZA UN SACĪJA:
ĶEMIET, ĒDIET. TĀ IR MANA MIESA, KAS PAR
JUMS TOP DOTA... (1.KORINT.11.23)

MANS BRĀLI, uz Golgatu nāc! Nāc pie krusta savās bēdās, gurdais ceļiniek! - Tie mums visiem zināmi dziesmas vārdi, kas īpašu nozīmību iegūst Lielajā piektā, aicinot visu kristīgo draudzi svētceļojumā uz Kristus ciešanu vietu. Ja, šim aicinājumam klausīdami, ejam līdzi visai Lielās piektas draudzei uz tālo sāpju kalnu, lai gara un ticības acīm skatītu notikumus, kas tur risinājās no trešās līdz devītai stundai, tad vērodami šo varēno, neaizmirstamo ainu, ko evaņģelists mums attēlojis tik vienkāršos un tomēr tik dievišķos vārdos, mēs arī vēl šodien varam

1.vērot cilvēkus ap krustu,
2. skatīt Pestītāju pie krusta,
3. nojaust Dievu pāri krustam.

1. Pie Kristus krusta apstājoties, varam vērot atpestītos un neatpestītos cilvēkus.Te, Lielās piektas rītā, Pestītāju uz soda vietu pavada jūdi un romieši, cilvēki no visdažādākām ļaužu kārtām, ziņkārīgi skatītāji un izbijušies draugi. Te - noziedznieki, kas līdz ar Kristu krustā kārti un sodīti, bet te arī tautas vadoņi - tiesneši un priesteri. Te - cietsirdīgi, asiņainās kaujās notrulināti un norūdīti vīri un arī klusas, maigas sievas, kas jau no Galilejas sekojušas Jēzum. Te - cilvēku pulks, kāds tas sastopams visur, visās zemes malās, senāk un tagad.

Šos ļaudis ap krustu vērojot, mēs vispirms ar izbailēm un izmisušu sirdi ieraugām, cik ļauns, nelietīgs un īgns var dažkārt kļūt cilvēks. Cilvēks te paceļ roku, lai svēto, nevainīgo naglotu pie krusta koka. Cilvēks ņirdzīgi smej par sirds skaidrā mokām un nāves cīņu. Cilvēks te Dieva vārdā nokauj Dieva sūtīto! Pie tam jāievēro, ka tie nav cilvēki, kas pieder kādas lielpilsētas padibenēm, savvaļā palaistiem bezgožiem -, nē, tās ir sabiedrības redzamākās, prominentākās personas, priesteŗi, dievbijīgi tautas pārstāvji, kas zaimo, nievā mirēju, iznīcina labo un dievišķo. Lūk, tāds ir cilvēks, kaut tas bagāts, mācīts, paēdis un ''tikumisks'', bet - neatpestīts! Un tāds pat šis neatpestītais cilvēks ir arī vēl šodien, kaut skolās gājis, grāmatas lasījis, mākslu baudījis un sagrābis savās rokās milzīgu, neaptveŗamu varu. Atcerēsimies tikai koncentracijas nometnes, kur cilvēks cilvēku nevien sagūstījis un

MĀCITĀJS V. MEŽARAUPS

Dzīvinošais vārds

(BIKTS RUNA)

"Saki tik vienu vārdu, tad mans kalps taps vesels." (Lūk. ev. 7,7).

KADĀ karstā vasaras dienā Vācijā klejoju pa pussagrautu pilsētu. Biju satrauktā gara stāvoklī, nemiers un skumjas pildīja sirdi. Kādā puķu dārziņā ieraudzīju skaistas rozes. Tās bija no karstuma pagurušas, ziedi liecās uz leju. Uz viena zieda ieraudzīju rasas pilienu. Vai viens rasas piliens spētu ziedu atveldzēt? Un tomēr... Ziedlapiņas ap šo rasas pilienu bija svaigākas. Tās mirdzēja uz zieda kā debesu dāvana. Tad man ienāca prātā evaņģelija vārdi: "Saki tik vienu vārdu, tad mans kalps taps vesels." Vai viens vārds spētu atveldzēt tvīkstošu dvēseli? Un tomēr... Tvīkstošā dvēsele alkst pēc viena vārda - pēc viena laba, mīļa, gaiša vārda.

Draugs, saki tik vienu vārdu: saki man vienu vārdu par maniem mīļiem, kas šķirti no manis, par maniem mīļiem, ko sedz nāves ēna, vienu vārdu par manu tēvu, māti, laulātu draugu, brāli, māsu, vienu vārdu par manu bērniņu; vienu vārdu par manu ilgu zemi, par manu dzimteni, vienu vārdu, kas mestu manā sirdī cerības staru, kas to padarītu gaišu; vienu izlīdzinošu vārdu starp mani un cilvēku, kas metis rūgtuma pilienu manā dzīves kausā, vienu piedodošu vārdu no cilvēka, kuŗu es sāpinājis.

Bet lai arī cik mīļu vārdu cilvēks mums teiktu, ja dvēsele cieš grēka, pārkāpuma dēļ Dieva priekšā, tad cilvēka vārds nespēj to mierināt, tad to nomierināt var tikai tas, kas mūsu dēļ cietis un miris, kas mūs mīlējis ar mūžīgu mīlestību, kas sacījis: "Es un tas Tēvs, mēs esam viens. Neviens nenāk pie tā Tēva, kā vien caur mani." Dzīves rūpēs un raizēs viņš saka uz mums: "Nāciet šurp pie manis visi, kas esat bēdīgi un grūtsirdīgi, es jūs gribu atvieglināt (Mat.ev.11,28). Kad sērojam par aizgājušiem piederīgiem, viņam ir vārds priekš mums: "Es esmu augšāmcelšanās un dzīvība; kas tic uz mani, jebšu tas būtu miris, tas dzīvos." Ja grēku nasta spiež, viņam ir vārds: "Ņemies drošu sirdi, mans dēls, tavi grēki tev piedoti." (Mat. ev. 9, 2), vai: "Arī es tevi nepazudinu; ej un negrēko vairs." (Jāņa ev. 8,11). Zemosimies gaišā Pestītāja priekšā un lūgsimies šo dzīvinošo vārdu!

Reiz lasīju par kādu notikumu oktobŗa revolūcijas laikā, Krievijā. Sagūstījuši vairākus simtus virsniekus, kadetus, studentus, lai pārējos iebiedētu, lielinieki nolemj nošaut katru trešo vai ceturto. Gūstekņus nostāda gaŗā ierindā. Viens no soda izpildītājiem skaita un pie katra trešā vai ceturtā atskan šāviens. Ierindas galā viens otram līdzās stāv jauns zēns, kadets un nosirmojis priesteris. Ātri pārlaidis skatu atlikušajiem, priesteris redz: Viņa jaunajam draugam draud nāve. Tad sirmais vīrs ātri izšķiŗas un, pirms kāds ko īsti aptvēris, pabīda jaunekli sāņus, nostājas viņa vietā un brīdi vēlāk saļimst pie zēna kājām lodes ķerts. Tikai tagad jauneklis apjēdz priesteŗa rīcību, saprot, ka viņš izglabts, dzīvo tāpēc, ka otrs viņa vietā miris un solās dzīvot šī upuŗa cienīgu dzīvi.

Kas uzkāpj Golgatā un stāv pie Kristus krusta, tas redz: te manā vietā Kristus izcieš sodu, te manā vietā Viņš mirst, lai es dzīvotu. Tādēļ arī tur vienmēr no jauna izjūtam dziesmā izteikto patiesību:

"Tu manu sirdi uzvarējis
Tu manas dvēs'les draugs un gans.
Tu sirdi paņēmis man esi
Ak, Kungs, ar savu ciešanu!"

Arī mūsu trulās, akmenī slēgtās sirdis var iekaŗot tikai lielais "Sāpju vīrs" Golgatā, jo vienīgi tur Dieva mīlestība salauž mūsu patmīlību, sarauj mūsu saites un satriec mūsu lepnumu.

3. Taču apcerot evaņģelista stāstu par Lielās piektas notikumiem, domājam nevien par cilvēkiem apkrustu un Pestītāju pie krusta, - mēs pieminam arī Dievu debesīs, kas ar varenām zīmēm apliecina pasaulei, ka Viņš zina, kas noticis Golgatā. Mēs lasām, ka zeme drebējusi, saule pazaudējusi savu spožumu un dievnamā pārplīsis priekškars. Pāri krustam debesīs ir Dievs, kas pasaules notikumiem nepaiet vienaldzīgi secen. Viņš nenovēršas un nevairās no šīs zemes, kas pilna tumsas, netaisnības un varmācības. Vēl vairāk, Viņš apliecina, ka Viņš ir Kungs, kas valda un valdīs, kārto un mūžīgi kārtos vēstures likteņus un izvedīs galā savus nodomus. Cilvēki paceļ krustus, rok kapus, auž priekškarus un aizveļ ceļā akmeņus, bet Dievs šos priekškarus saplēš un kapus atveŗ, lai savējos no posta un nāves vestu dzīvībā un svētībā. Tā Lielās piektas vakarā jaužam jau Lieldienas rīta tuvumu un pie Kristus krusta, apzinoties sevi atpestītus, mierīgi un ticīgi varam gaidīt Augšāmcelšanās dienu.

MĀCĪTĀJS DR. KĀRLIS BILZENS

JĒZUS KRISTUS AUGŠĀMCELŠANĀS ATKLĀSME

LIECINOT par augšāmceltā Jēzus Kristus tukšo kapu nedēļas pirmās (jeb ''trešās dienas'' pēc Lielās Piektdienas) rītā un par augšāmceltā Jēzus Kristus pašapliecināšanos parādībās un vārdos (sal. I Kor. 15,3...; Lūkas 24, 17...; Mateja 28,9...; Jāņa 20,15...; 21,5...; Apustuļu darbu 9,4...; 26,14) jaunajā dzīvības īstenībā, Jaunā Derība, ticības bijībā neviena cilvēka nepieredzēto un cilvēkam nepieejamo - netveramo Dieva-Tēva transcendento darbu segdama, tomēr ticības atziņā atklāj šo noslēpumu: Dievs uzmodinājis krustā sisto un kapā guldīto cilvēku Jēzu. Kā atklājās šis transcendentais notikums immanencē - vēsturē? - Jaunā Derība atbild: Jēzus Kristus pats ir parādījies - apliecinājies dzīvs saviem mācekļiem, atklādams arī cilvēkam neatklājamo Dieva noslēpumu.

Nostājies ar saviem mācekļiem personīgās (es-tu) attiecībās, saistījis viņus ar sevi dzīvā ticībā (in actu fidei), Jēzus Kristus ir modinājis mācekļos ticības atziņu, kas devusi mācekļiem spējas spriest ticības spriedumus. Bet līdz ar liecību, ka mācekļi augšāmceltā Jēzus Kristus pašatklāsmi - pašapliecināšanos viņa parādībās uztvēruši - pieredzējuši ticības pieredzē un ticības atziņā, Jaunā Derībā arī vēl apliecina, ka mācekļiem Jēzus Kristus pašatklāsme un pašapliecināšanās bijusi pieejama arī viņu jutekliskai pieredzei un uztverei. Ticības atziņa liecina, ka mācekļi augšāmcelto Jēzu Kristu nav redzējuši tikai ticības skatījumā, bet arī patiesi jutekliski, objektīvi ar savām acīm. Ticības atziņa liecina, ka mācekļi augšāmcelto Jēzu Kristu nav dzirdējuši tikai ticībā, bet arī patiesi jutekliski, objektīvi ar savām ausīm. Augšāmcēlies Jēzus Kristus savās parādībās ticīgajiem mācekļiem bijis arī ārpus mācekļiem esoša, jutekliski-objektīvi tveramа īstenība debesu godības reālitātē!

Mēģinot atbildēt uz Jēzus Kristus augšāmcelšanās un pašapliecināšanās jautājumiem, kuros ietverti izdibināšanas centieni - ''kad?'', ''kā?'' un ''kāds?'' - Jaunās Derības liecības kļūst redzami atturīgākas. Augšāmceltā Jēzus Kristus jaunā dzīvības īstenība ir it kā reizē immanenta un transcendenta. Lai izvairītos no cilvēcīgajiem izdibināšanas centieniem un tomēr izteiktu neizteicamo - Jēzus Kristus uzmodināšanu-augšāmcelšanos - Dieva transcendento-eschatoloģisko darbu immanencē-vēsturē, Jaunā Derība godina draudzes Galvu gavilēdama himnās: ''Kristus ir nonāvēts miesā, bet dzīvs darīts garā!'' (I Pēt. 3,18). Kristus ''ir atklāts miesā, taisnots garā, skatīts no eņģeļiem, sludināts tautās, ticēts pasaulē, uzņemts godībā'' (I Timoteja 3,16).

Vēstījot par augšāmceltā Jēzus Kristus skatījumiem, kuros mācekļi pieredzējuši dzīvo Jēzu Kristu objektīvi skaidrā līdzībā ar zemes dzīves Jēzu un tomēr debesu godības reālitātē, Jaunā Derība liecina, arī par augšāmceltā Jēzus Kristus evaņģeliju, ko dzīvais Jēzus Kristus dāvinājis atklājoties-apliecinoties saviem mācekļiem parādībās. Mācekļi Jaunajā Derībā apliecina, ka viņi augšāmcelto Jēzu Kristu nevien patiesi redzējuši, bet arī patiesi dzirdējuši. Dzīvais Jēzus Kristus ir runājis uz mācekļiem un sarunājies ar tiem.

Visdziļākā kristīgā cilvēka ticības atziņa Lieldienas gaismā, laikam, gan ir tā, ka bez augšāmceltā Jēzus Kristus Lieldienas evaņģelija visa Jēzus Kristus zemes dzīve, Golgatas krusts, tukšais kaps, parādības u.t.t. - vispār visa Dieva atklāsme pagātnē un nākotnē - paliktu kā atsevišķi neizprotami notikumi zem jautājuma zīmes! Dzīvais Jēzus Kristus pats skaidroja vārdos visu notikušo (Lūkas 24, 17...; Mat. 28,9...; Jāņa 20,15...; 21,5...), dāvinot mācekļiem Svēto Rakstu izpratni (Lūkas 24,45). Zem Golgatas krusta mācekļiem bija redzams Dieva ''zīmogs''; krustā sistajā Pestītājā atklājas Dzīvības Valdnieks; ''nāve, kuru Kristus

PROF. K. KUNDZIŅŠ

Krustā sistais

KLINTS, KUR TVEROS, GLĀBEJS CĒLS,
KRUSTĀ SISTAIS DIEVA DĒLS!
TAVAS ASINIS KAD LĪST,
VISAS MŪSU KAITES DZĪST.
GRĒCINIEKU PATVĒRUMS,
SAVU VAIGU RĀDI MUMS!

KAD VISAPKĀRT ELLE KAUC,
LAI MAN TEVĪ SLĒPTIES ĻAUTS,
UN KUR BRĀĻI SAPĒS TVĪKST,
TEVI LAI TIE SKATĪT DRĪKST.
SVĒTO KAUSU VIŅIEM SNIEDZ,
LAI VAR ZIEDĒT MIERA ZIEDS.

DEBESDRAUDZES GAVILES
MUŽĪBĀ TEV SLAVU NES.
PIEŅEM, KAUT ES CILVĒKS MAZS,
ARĪ MANAS LŪGŠANAS,
KLINTS, KUR TVEROS, GLĀBĒJS CĒLS,
SAPJU PILNAIS DIEVA DĒLS!

(Brīvi pēc angļu korāļa ''Rock of Ages'')

mirst, ir dzīvība.'' Krustā sistais Jēzus Kristus jau krustā ir uzvarētājs.Rokas, kas dzīvē labu vien darījušas, jau Golgatas krustā svētīdamas svētīja zem krusta pulcētos jaunajai Lieldienas cerībai. Lielās Piektdienas krustu apstaro Lieldienas saule.

Jēzus Kristus vārdi deva mācekļiem iespēju ticībā pieredzēt krustā sistā un augšāmceltā Jēzus Kristus pašatklāsmi kā Dieva atklāsmi, deva iespēju tuvoties savai transcendentajai dzīvības īstenībai un deva arī iespēju aiz atvērtā, tukšā kapa nojaust notikušo transcendento uzmodināšanu-augšāmcelšanu-augšāmcelšanos, proti, Dieva lielo darbu. Jau eņģeļu sludinātā augšāmcelšanās vēsts pie tukšā kapa bija Dieva atklāsme, kas pati sevi apliecinādama, darīja acis un ausis spējīgas pieredzēt Dieva pasaules īstenību. Kā Jēzus Kristus vēsturiskās dzīves sākumā eņģeļi gavilēja, vēstīdami par Dieva brīnumdarbu - Kristus dzimšanu - tā tagad tie gavilē, vēstīdami par Jēzus Kristus zemes dzīvi noslēdzēju Dieva brīnumu - Jēzus Kristus augšāmcelšanu.

Kas ir Jēzus Kristus augšāmcelšana-augšāmcelšanās? - Dievs krustā sisto un krustā mirušo Jēzu uzmodinādams un debesu godībā pie sevis ''labās rokas'' (Apustuļu darbi 7,55; Rom.8, 34; sal. Marka 14,62) paaugstinādams, ir teicis savu ''nē!'' uz krustā sitējiem un savu ''jā!'' uz Krustā Sisto (Apustuļu darbi 2,23.24. 31-33; 3,15; 4,10; u.t. t. Rom. 4,24; I Kor. 15,15; Filip. 2, 9-11; Ef. I,20...; u.c. vietas). Dievs Jēzu ir darījis par debesu un zemes Kungu (Apustuļu darbi 2,36; sal. Mateja 28,18). Dievs Tēvs savu Dēlu (kas arī visā savā zemes dzīvē bija Dēls, bet gan nepazīts, ''iztukšojies'', ''kalpa sejā'', ''vājībā''; sal. II Kor. 13,4; Filip. 2,7.8; Ebr. 2, 14; 5,2) paaugstinādams iecēlis to (no jauna) par Dieva Dēlu spēkā (sal. Rom 1, 4; Filip. 2, 9...; Jāņa 17,5; I Tim. 3,16).

Augšāmceltā Jēzus Kristus evaņģelijs (jeb ''četrdesmit dienu evaņģelijs''), šķiet, bijis daudz plašāks nekā vārdi, kuŗus atrodam uzrakstītus Jaunajā Derībā. Blakus faktam, ka augšāmceltais Jēzus Kristus ir skaidrojis savu zemes dzīvi, krustu, augšāmcelšanos un savas parādības, drošs ir arī viņa norādījums uz savu tālāko pašatklāsmi un pašapliecināšanos - uz Svētā Gara (t.i. no Tēva un Dēla izejošā Svēta Gara) izliešanu Vasarsvētkos un Svētā Gara atklāsmi kristīgajā baznīcā.

LEONIDS BREIKSS

Mana atgriešanās pie Kristus

MOZUS

ES Bībeli sāku lasīt no paša sākuma: ar Mozu un viņa grāmatām.

Un kaut arī es nemīlu tautu, no kuŗas Mozus ir nācis, tad tomēr arvien un arvien klusībā noteicu: patiesi - viņš ir gudrs bijis.

Jo es lasīju dažas jaunas grāmatas, ko šīs dienas zinātnieki bija rakstījuši par tautām un viņu miesu un asinīm, un es redzēju: Mozus to visu jau bija zinājis.

Bet jo vairāk es klausījos Mozus valodā, jo atkal un atkal Kristus man sāka likties svešāks.

To es nesapratu uzreiz, ka Kristus ir nācis, lai celtu tā, kā Mozus nav cēlis. Un - lai celtu to, ko Mozus nav cēlis.

To es nesapratu, ka Mozus bija nācis - celt garu. Un celt cilvēkos - dievišķīgo.

Jo Mozus bija lopkopis, bet Kristus bija Dieva dēls.

Un Mozus mācīja - zemi iemantot un paturēt, bet Kristus mācīja - debesis iemantot.

Patiešām - man likās: kas zemi paturēs, tas paturēs - debesis.

Un tāpēc man - Mozus iepatikās.

Bet šis gars atkal par jaunu mani skubināja - Kristu noliegt.

*

Tad nu - dzīvodams šajā garā un tā ticēdams un rakstīdams, es ieraudzīju, ka kāda gaisma un kāda svētība izzūd manā mūžā.

Mana māte sacīja, ka es kļūstot cietsirdīgs un nepazīstot žēlastības ne pret sevi, ne pret citiem.

Un es sacīju:

''Vai tad tā nav? Vai mums jau laikus tas nav jāsaprot? Vai mums jau laikus nav jāmācās dzīvot un gatavoties mūžīgai cīņai uz dzīvību un nāvi?

Tikai tādi mēs paturēsim zemi!

Bet Kristus, kuŗu tu man arvien atgādini, viņš to nemāca.

Ja mēs zemi gribam paturēt, tad mums no Kristus ir jāatsakās. Jo debesis bez zemes - tas ir tukšs sapnis.''

Šajā brīdī māte man neko neteica. Varbūt viņai likās, ka es esmu pārāk apmāts.

Bet vienu viņa man atkal lūdza:

''Tu atceries, ko tu man solīji?

Ka tu pret Kristu nerakstīsi!''

Šajā brīdī es gandrīz nožēloju, ka esmu tā solījies.

Bet es tomēr atbildēju:

''Es atceros!''

\+ \+ \+

Nav iespējams izdibināt to, cik tālu pats augšāmcēlies Jēzus Kristus ir novedis mācekļus savas augšāmcelšanās un tās nozīmes izpratnē un kur sākas Vasarsvētku Gara liesmu gaisma, bet neapstrīdama gan ir Jaunās Derības liecība, ka Lieldienā un Vasarsvētkos mācekļi ir saņēmuši augšāmceltā un paaugstinātā Jēzus Kristus Lieldienas evaņģeliju un Svēto Garu, kas devis tiem spēju ieskatīties Dieva atklāsmes vēsturē un izprast to pagatnē un nākotnē (eschatoloģija).

Dzīvais Jēzus Kristus personīgi un Svētajā Garā ir dāvinājis mācekļiem-apustuļiem un pirmdraudzei dzīvās ticības liecības, kas kā pneimatiskas (ne statiskas) liecības ir uzrakstītas Jaunajā Derībā. Šīs Jaunās Derības ticības liecības grib novest līdz augšāmceltajam un paaugstinātajam Jēzum Kristum, kas Svētajā Garā Lieldienas evaņģelijā pats grib apliecināties savā dzīvības īstenībā un debesu godībā savā baznīcā arī ''tagad'' un ''šeit.''

Pauls Gerharts un viņa dziesmas

CIEŠANAS laiks, īpaši Klusā nedēļa nav domājama bez dziesmas "Ak galva asiņaina". Tiklīdz Lielajā Piektdienā atskan tās pirmie akordi, acu priekšā iznirst Krustā Sistais, viņa sāpēs noliektā galva, nāves mokas. Šai dziesmai ir vara pat vienaldzīgu sirdi padarīt jūtīgu, vest to tuvāk Lielajam Cietējam.

Dziesmu grāmatā zem tās ir autora paraksts - Pauls Gerharts. Meldiju grāmatā atrodams komponista vārds - Leo Haslers.

Kas pazīst kautcik baznīcas vēsturi, zina, ka šī dziesma darināta pēc kādas viduslaikos populāras dziesmas "Salve caput cruentatum" parauga. Tas bija vesels dziesmu cikls, kur mistiķis kvēliem vārdiem godināja savu Pestītāju viņa grūtajā ciešanu brīdī pie krusta. Novērsies no pārējās pasaules un garā pārcēlies uz Golgatu, viņš redz tikai savu Kungu, vispirms viņa kājas, tad ceļus, celdams galvu augstākrokas, sānus, krūtis, sirdi, visbeidzot - galvu. Stundām ilgi viņš raugās katrā sava Kunga locekli un redz, kā cilvēki to šautuši, lauzuši vai ievainojuši. Viņš atceras, ka Kunga kājas nekad nav piekusušas tecēt pie grēciniekiem, rokas svētīt, sirds mīlēt, galva pacietīgi nest ērkšķu vainagu. Katru locekli viņš garā apmīļo un no sirds sveicina .

Sakarā ar to šīs dziesmas iesauca pēc tosākuma vārdiem par salvēm (latīņu vārds "salve" nozīmē "Esi sveicināts"). Par to sacerētāju turēja pazīstamo mistiķi Bernhardu no Klervozas (1090-1153), kam bijusi tik liela nozīme viduslaiku garīgajā dzīvē. Jaunākie pētījumi tomēr rāda, ka autors meklējams viņa mācekļu pulkā, varbūt tas ir Arnulfs no Luvenas.

Pauls Gerharts ir pavisam citas noskaņas cilvēks. Viņš pieder luteriskās ortodoksijas laikmetam, kad nevis jūsmīga skatīšana, bet rūpīga nogremdēšanās Svēto Rakstu studijās un tīrā mācība likās pats galvenais. Dzimis viņš 1607.g. 12. martā Grāfenhainichenā pie Vitenbergas kā birģermeistera dēls, bet jau agri zaudējis tēvu, uzaudzis trīsdesmit gadu kaŗa laikā, studējis Vitenbergā un ilgus gadus bijis mājskolotājs, jo kaŗa posta dēļ nav bijušas draudzes, kas varētu aicināt mācītājus. Mājskolotāja gados Gerharts sācis dzejot, sasniegdams aizvien labāku formu. Beidzot 1651.g. viņš kļuva mācītājs Mitenvaldē pie Berlīnes.

Šīs baznīcas altāŗa pamatā bija kokgriezums ar Kristus galvu ērkšķu vainagā. Uz tā bija tumši traipi. Četrpadsmit gadus pirms Gerharta atnākšanas Mitenvaldi bija izlaupījuši sirotāji. Prāvests Galus Luters bija stājies tiem pretī, bet sirotāji bija viņu nogalinājuši pašā altāŗa priekšā. Laikam asins traipi uz altāŗa bija atstāti, lai tie mitenvaldiešiem atgādinātu pārciestās šausmas. Agrāk kokgriezumam varbūt nepiegrieza sevišķu vērību, tagad pie tā apstājās baznīcas apmeklētāju skati. Jo ilgāk ļaudis raudzījās tajā, jo dzīvāk viņi pārdzīvoja to pašu, ko reiz Bernhards un viņa mācekļi — mistisko kopību ar viņu Kungu Golgatas kalnā.

Ak galva asiņaina
Un ērkšķiem kronēta,
Ak galva, nāves vainā
Un sāpēs noliekta!
Ak galva, augsti celta,
Ar godu rotāta,
Nu apsmieta un pelta,
Sirds tevi sveicina!

Šis pārdzīvojums bija nolemts arī Gerhartam. Tīrās mācības stingrais vīrs izplūda jūtu kvēlē. Tā radās septiņas luteriešu salves, to starpā beidzamā, "Ak galva asiņaina", viena no visu laiku ievērojamākām garīgajām dziesmām, himna Sāpju Vīram.

Arī pats Gerharts savā ziņā bija sāpju vīrs. Viņš nevien pazina trīsdesmit gadu kaŗa tiešamību-cik maz vērta ir cilvēka dzīvība, par ko Psalmu grāmatas rakstnieks saka, viņš zied kā puķe laukā; kad vējš pār to pāriet, tad tās vairs nevaid, un tās vietu vairs nepazīst" (103,15-16). Šo patiesību viņš pats bija pārbaudījis savā dzīvē. Kad viņš beidzot 48 gadu vecumā bija kļuvis ģimenes tēvs, viņš īsā laikā pazaudēja četrus bērnus, mīļoto sievu un citus tuviniekus. Tādēļ visās viņa dziesmās ieskanas laikmeta un personīgais traģisms - mūžības domas. Sveicinājis savā Pestītaja sāpēs noliekto galvu, viņš lūdzas:

Kad šķiršanās būs klātu,
No manis nešķiries.
Dod mirstot drošu prātu,
Pie manis piestājies!
Kad, sakampts nāves rokām,
Es bailēs iegrimšu,
Tad izrauj man' no mokām
Caur tavu ciešanu!

Gerharta dziesminieka gaitā nozīmīgs bija 1657.gads. Tad viņu aicināja par mācītāju uz Nikolaja draudzi Berlīnē. Tur par ērģelnieku bija Johans Krīgers, viens no ievērojamākiem luterāņu korāļu komponistiem visos laikos. Nu tuvā sadarbībā ar Krīgeru varēja rasties skaistākās garīgo dziesmu pērles, piem. Adventa dziesma "Kā būs man tevi saņemt" (diemžēl mēs, latvieši, to dziedam pēc citas meldijas).

Meldija dziesmai "Ak galva asiņaina" patapināta no citas dziesmas - Ceļš ir man apakš kājām" (666.nr.). Tās autors ir Hanss Leo Haslers (1564-1612), bagāto Fugeru ērģelnieks Augsburgā, vēlāk Prāgas galmā. Meldija radusies 16ol.g. un sākumā bijusi domāta laicīgai dziesmai "Mana sirds ir samulsusi", bet pirmo reizi lietota garīgai dziesmai jau 1613.g. Gerlicā izdotajā dziesmu grāmatā. Cik jauki šī meldija saskan ar Gerharta dziesmas tekstu! Itkā Haslers būtu to rakstījis tieši tai.

Gerharta vecuma dienas bija sarūgtinātas. Frīdrichs Vilhelms, saukts Lielais Kurfirsts, pats reformāts, pēc neveiksmīga mēģinājuma disputa ceļā panākt luterāņu un reformātu apvienošanos Brandenburgā, 1664.g. ar likumu aizliedza abām pusēm polemizēt no kanceles un prasīja, lai visi mācītāji šo solījumu apliecinātu ar savu parakstu. Gerharts šo prasību sajuta kā ierobežojumu evaņģeliskai brīvībai un tādēļ solījumu neparakstīja. Sekas - viņš tika atlaists no mācītāja vietas Berlīnē. Viņš pārcēlās un Libenu Lauzicā, kur vēl gandrīz gada desmitu bija mācītājs un nomira 1676.g.27. maijā. Apglabāts turienes baznīcā.

Ikvienam dziesminiekam pienāk brīdis, kad viņa dziesmas sāk

aizmirst, jo draudze prasa laikmetīgākas. Pavisam maz ir dziesminieku, kas kļūst ''klasiķi '', t.i. kuŗu dziesmas pārdzīvo visus laikmetus. Gerharts ir viens no tiem. Tagadējā vācu dziesmu grāmatā ir kādas 40 Gerharta dziesmas - vairāk kā jebkuŗam citam dziesmiekam. Mūsējā ir 25. Gerharta dziesmas ir visās dziesmu grāmatās. Ņemsim angļu, zviedru, somu vai ungāru dziesmu grāmatu - visās atradīsim Gerharta mūzas paraugus. Saka, ka Gerharts esot vislielākais luterāņu dziesminieks.

''Ak galva asiņaina'' latviešu dziesmu grāmatā pirmo reizi uzņemta 1740. vai 1769. gadā. Tulkotājs palicis nezināms. Eksistējuši vēl citi tās tulkojumi, piem. latviešu tautības mācītāja Vilhelma Šteineka (1681-1735) brīvais tulkojums ''Ak vaigs no asins strutām''. Prāvests Kārlis Kundziņš savās atmiņās stāsta, ka septiņdesmitajos gados, kad viņš bijis kandidāts Šteineka draudzē Tukumā, šī dziesma allaž tur dziedāta ciešanu laikā. Mūsu tagadējais tulkojums pārstrādāts pēc agrākā, nezināmā tulkotāja darba; pārstrādājumu veikuši 1921. g. dziesmu grāmatas rediģētāji.

No pārējām Gerharta dziesmām mūsu dziesmu grāmatā būtu mināmas: ''Kā būs man tevi saņemt'' (6.nr.), ''Pie tava šūp'ļa stāvu es'' (33.nr.), ''Tūkstoškārt tev' sveicināju'' (160.nr. - kāda cita no septiņām salvēm), ''Nem manī mājas vietu'' (208.nr.), ''Kā es Dievu neslavēšu'' (337.nr.), ''Kad jācieš raizes, mokas'' (451.nr.). Pēdējā dziesma jaunajā izdevumā ir zaudējusi savu īpatnību. Oriģinālā tā ir akrostichs, t.i. katrs pants sākās ar vienu no sekošajiem vārdiem: ''Pavēli tam Kungam savu ceļu un cerē uz viņu, tad viņš gan darīs'' (Ps.37,5). Agrākā tulkojumā tās sākums bija ''P a v ē l i e s savās mokās''. Sevišķi skaistas ir Gerharta rīta un vakara dziesmas ''Nāc, mana sirds, ar prieku'' (550.nr.) un ''Nu klusas visas vietas'' (574.nr.). Sevišķi pēdējā ir izteikts mūsu vectēvu paaudzes latviešu ''sirdsšķīsto ļaužu'' dvēseles miers:

Šī diena jau pagalam,
Pa visām debess malām
Tās zvaigznes spīd kā zelts!
Es ar' tāds skaidris būšu,
Kad es no zemes kļūšu
Pie Dieva debess godā celts!

MĀCĪTĀJS K. KRONIS

LIELDIENU RĪTA JAUTĀJUMS

Jēzus viņai saka: Sieva, ko tu raudi? (Jāņa evaņģelija 20,15-a)

KAD no mana dzimtā pagasta devās uz Dieva namu, - pirms ceļš aiz upes stāvus uzvijās baznīckalnā, tas vēl mūsu pusē pa augstu egļu mežu meta slaidu loku ap mazu zemes gabaliņu, kuŗā sajaucās ar zemi seni augumi un bija nolikti pabeigti mūži rindām vien kā dziju darbnīcas plauktos pietecējušas liek pilnas spoles. Lieldienu rītā, apspīdētā saules un pavasaŗa spirgtā vēja apšaltā, gara acis tur redz apturētu baznicēnu pajūgu, kuŗā brauc no bērnu dienām pazīstami ļaudis. Kamēr tēvs palicis ratos pieturēt grožus, māti kā iepelēku lauku irbi veicīgi soļi nes piekalnē, nolikt mazu sauju pūpolu pie kāda krusta, vai tikai tāpat brīdi klusi pastāvēt, krustiski saliktām rokām. Tad zirdziņš atkal tek tālāk - un braucēji klausīsies brīnišķīgo vēsti par augšāmcelšanos.

Ar nāves tumšo zīmi, no zemes dziļuma cirsto salto ēnu krustu plecos savā ikdienā un savā bēdu dvēselē cilvēks iet un iet, no dienas dienā, un apstājas, noslaucīt asaras pie kapiem, raktiem zemes klēpī un sirds kapsētā. Un ir tik bezgala izsalcis dzīvības un tiecas tās kā neēdušais satvert riecienu sausas maizes.

Ko tu raudi? - jautā Lieldienu rīts.

Marijai Madaļai to vaicāja divreiz - papriekš eņģeļi pie tukšā Kristus kapa un vēlāk, neredzams nācis, dzīvais Kungs pats. Bet viņa nebija viena, kas raud. Tais divi naktīs un klusajā sestdienā kopš Lielās piektas varbūt ļoti daudziem nakts tumsā vai slepenībā bija noritējušas asaras, - tiem, kam sāpēja nesadzijušas brūces un sāpēja sirdis, kam slāpa pēc taisnības, kas bija izstumti no cilvēcības, kas arī bija gribējuši satikt savu Pestītāju, bet nebija paguvuši. Kā ēnas viņi slapstījās ar savu vientulību un kā ēna pār viņu iedragāto dzīvi nolaidās jautājums: pie kā nu mēs iesim dzīves un mūsu dvēseles bēdās, kas nu mums zaimu vietā teiks labu un mīļu vārdu, kas nu svētīdams sniegs pretī roku, dos no savas taisnības, ja mūsu taisnību atņēma farizeji un rakstu mācītāji un samina svešie?

Marija Madaļa pazina savu Pestītāju. Kas zina, nekur jau par to nav rakstīts, cik no tiem, kas bija raudājuši pie Kristus kapa Arimatijas Jāzepa dārzā un tālumā, pazina savu dzīvo Pestītāju Lieldienu rītā un ir pazinuši pēc tam, visā kristīgās baznīcas vēsturē, kam bija būt vienam vienīgam, nepārtrauktam Lieldienu laikam. Arī mēs jābūtībā esam Lieldienu ticības ļaudis, ne jau bez savas Zaļās ceturtas un Lielās piektas, bet izstaigājuši tās. Bet vai esam dzirdējuši, ka Lieldienu rīts vaicā: Ko tu raudi? -

Tā mēs mēdzam mierinādami pavaicāt saviem draugiem un paziņām, kad viņu mājas durvis vērušas un pie viņu galda sēdušās nekur neaicinātas viešņas - dzīves bēdas. Taču viss, ko pēc tam varam teikt, ir tikai labā sabiedrībā iemācīta pieklājība. Bet kad mūs uzrunā Viņš, kas Lieldienu rītā nolika visu zemes nīcību kā satīto sviedru autu savā klinšu kapā, un atkārto to pašu: Ko tu raudi? - Viņš tiešām var mierināt, jo zina, kas patiesi sāp. Jo ne jau par to, ko zemē glabājot ir tik grūt, itkā smilts nedunētu vis uz šķirsta vāka, bet kaudzē krātos uz mūsu krūtīm, ne par to tikdaudz sāp sirds, ne tā, kas jāpamet neīstenots, nesākts, pusdarīts, nokavēts, aizmirsts, ne tā ir tik ļoti, ļoti žēl, kā neziņa par mūžību var satraukt. - Bailes būt bez mūžības - tās mūs nomāc un par to cilvēks raud mirušo un savas sirds kapsētā.

Un mūsu spēkos nav to iegūt. Satvert sīkumos, nīcīgās zemes lietās lielo mūžību - tās cilvēka neapslāpējamās ņemirstības alkas Jo viņš pareizi izmana, ka bez mūžīgās dzīves nav jēgas un attaisnojuma arī viņa zemes laikam. Tik no tieksmes šo mūžību sev izpelnīties, izaug un ceļas vareni un skaisti darbi, kad cilvēka gars rada. Bet arī tam ir liktas samērā šauras robežas, un paiet viss - un klājas ar aizmirstību kā aizaugošs ezers ar purva sūnu, zūd kā kalnu strauts, ko zibens ātrumā aprok brūkoša lavīna. Cilvēks cīnās izmisis kā

reiz Jēkabs tumšā naktī līdz pat ausmas svīdumam cīnījās ar savu Dievu, cīnās, lai atskaldītu mūžībai zelta mirkļu drumslas, kas starotu vēl daudz paaudzēm pāri pēc viņa, - un slauka asaras, domājot, ka, atdalījušās no pirmpamata, šīs niecīgās šķembas agrāk vai vēlāk beigs starot savu mirdzumu. Viņš raud par nīcību.

Dievs katram mums ļauj sekot Kristum Ģetzemanes dārzā un naktī. Bet vai tad, kad mēs cīnījāmies ar Visuvarenā gribu savā dvēselē, pār mums kā eņģeļa izplēstie spārni laidās Dieva gaisma, vai mēs savā dvēseles cīņā neesam kā naktī apmaldījušies? Vai zinām ceļu uz Lieldienu rītu?

Golgatas kalnā, kur Jēzus Kristus savā laikā pats izšķīrās uzkāpt, daudzi ir pakāpušies un daudzi arī griezušies labāk atpakaļ, citiem tur bija jāiet, kād ceļu atpakaļ slēdza no visām pusēm, bet cik ir to, kas pāri šai vietai ir spējuši aizsniegt Lieldienu rītu?

Kā mūs visus reiz cels un nesīs, Dievs vien zina, mīļas vai samaksātas rokas, un atstās noliktus nīcības pakrēslā, tā arī mirušo Jēzu reiz pacēla uz rokām draugi, kas Viņu bija mīlējuši dzīvē un mīlēja vēl nāvē. Bet kad ausa pirmais Lieldienu rīts, Kristus pats iznāca no sava kapa, lai rādītu, ka dzīvība ir vairāk kā nāve.

Nav mūsu varā no mūža dusas piecelt savus mīļos, stingušās lūpās no jauna iedvest siltu elpu un nāves miega pilnām acīm aizdegt jaunu pasaules gaismu. Lai cik liela būtu mūsu mīlestība, lai cik mēs ciestu un lai kā ticētu - tā mēs nevaram. Bet kad mēs dzirdam gaišu balsi, kas skan kā tornī Lieldienu agrā rīta zvans, balsi, kuŗa tāpat kā evaņģelijā noskumušai sievai taujā: Ko tu raudi? tad mēs dzirdam itkā mūžību pašu. Tad nav vairs baiļu pilniem jātrīc nāves ēnā šinī saulē, šinī dzīvē. Ticīgais zina līdz ar Kristu, ka dzīvība veic nāvi, ka pēdējā ir tikai īss mirklis tumsas, ir tikai smaga sauja vēsu trūdu, bet vairāk par to ir dievišķā daļa katrā cilvēkā, mūsu mūžīgais, neizniīcināmais, nepārtrauktais "es". To modināt, atgādināt, ka tā ir, nāca Pestītājs. Viņš pats cēlās augšā Lieldienās, lai mūsu apziņā celtos augšā mūžība. Lai šis brīdis būtu tilts starp šo un viņu sauli. Lai nevienam, kas Viņam tic, nebūtu jāraud, ne mirušo kapos, ne savas sirds kapsētā.

Tik daudz, ļoti daudz ir guldīts zemē, zem krusta dzimtenē un svešumā, tik daudz zudis un kritis un guļ bez krusta zīmes - jauni augumi, mīļi un skaisti sapņi, grūta darba augļi un to saldums - viss kļuvis par izdzisušiem pelniem, par biedu, par žēlabām. Bet kad neviena nav - un visdziļākajās sāpēs tā tas mēdz būt -, kas ceļ augšā, mierina un dod jaunu spēku: klaus', kā kāda balss Svētajos rakstos arī mūsu dienu cilvēkiem vaicā: Ko tu raudi? - Un uzrunātais paceļ acis un redz: Kristus ir pie Viņa Lieldienu rītā un spožs saules vainags vijas ērkšķu vietā ap Viņa galvu un saules staru pilnas ir Viņam abas rokas, un savām mīļajām acīm vērdamies pretī visiem, kas Viņu tik ļoti gaidījuši, dala šo gaismu, lai neviens nepaliek bez sava Lieldienu spožuma, no tiem, kas tic un kam vajaga dzīvības un gaismas, jo dzīvība ir gaisma.

BET EŅĢELIS UZRUNĀJA SIEVAS, SACĪDAMS: NEBĪSTAITIES, JO ES ZINU, KA JŪS MEKLEJAT JEZU, KRUSTĀ SISTO. VIŅŠ NAV SEITAN, JO VIŅŠ IR AUGSĀM CELIES, KĀ VIŅŠ SACĪJIS. NĀCIET SURP UN RAUGAIT TO VIETU, KUR VIŅŠ GULEJA. UN EITA STEIGSUS UN SAKAIT VIŅA MĀCEKĻIEM, KA VIŅŠ IR NO MIROŅIEM AUGSĀM CELIES; UN REDZI, VIŅŠ JUMS PAPRIEKSU NOIES UZ GALILEJU, TUR JŪS VIŅU REDZESIT. REDZI ES JUMS TO ESMU SACĪJIS. (MT. 28,5-7)

Kristus mūs pestī no nīcības. Viņš atdod katram atpakaļ mūžību, ko reiz viens cilvēks pazaudēja jau Paradīzes laikā. Un tiem, kas Lieldienu rītā priecājas par augšāmcelšanos no kapa Arimatijas Jāzepa dārzā, dzīvajā dabā un cilvēku sirdīs, viņš no jauna apstiprina: "Es esmu augšāmcelšanās un dzīvība; kas man tic, lai arī viņš būtu miris, dzīvos. Un ikviens, kas dzīvo un tic man, ne mūžam nemirs." (Jāņa 11, 25/26).

Saldāks par medu

KĀZAS.

KAD vasara jau gluži piekususi, gan ābeles, gan viņa krūma nastas nesdama, pienāk rudens un smejas: Nu, ko tu pūlies, meit! Svied tak zemē! Un rudens vēl tīšām parausta vasaru aiz piedurknes: Nu, redzi, lai tak birst - būs vieglāk kociņam, būs vieglāk tev. Sadusmotā vasara nomet savu nastu - aiziet. Bet rudens stāv un smejas: He, he!

Nu ir īstais laiks rīkot kāzas. Un Simsans rīko. Tēvs vēlējis, māte nav liegusi, un līgaviņa saka ''jā.'' Nu, ko tad vairāk! Šurp spēlētājus! Šurp dejotājus! Tā. Un spēlētāji spēlē, un dejotāji dejo, tikai līgaviņa staigā lūpu uzmetusi.

Kas tad līgaviņai vainas? - Puisis jūt gan. Puisis zina arī to, ka viņa līgaviņa nav vienīgā - trīsdesmit puiši lauza savas puišu galvas. Nu, palauziet vien. Tikpat neatminēsiet.

Septiņas dienas spēlētāji spēlē un dejotāji dejo, septiņas dienas trīsdesmit puiši min Simsana mīklu un nevar atminēt.

Septītajā dienā līgava paņem Simsanu pie rokas un ieved savā kambarī.

''Tu, ļaunais!'' viņa saka, lūpu uzmetusi un apmet tam rokas ap kaklu.

''Kāpēc tad tu mani precēji, ja mani nemīli? ''

Nu, tu brīnums! Tādās sprukās Simsans vēl savu mūžu nav bijis. Labāk jau tad lauvu just uz sava kakla - zināsi vismaz ko iesākt. Ko, vēl kas - asaras? Nē, to nu vairs Simsans nevar izturēt.

''Neraudi!'' viņš lūdzas gluži izmisis. ''Es nevaru paciest, ka tu raudi, un... un... man tā nešērti.''

''Nujā, vai es neteicu!'' nopūšas līgava, rokas atlaizdama un aizgriezdamās. ''Tagad man vairs nav šaubu: tu mani nīsti...''

''Bet nē... bet nē taču,'' Simsans taisnojas. ''Paklausies... Es... dikti...''

''Ko dikti? ''

''... tevi mīļoju.''

''Vai tu visiem, ko tu mīli, vēli ļaunu? ''

''Es? ! Tev ļaunu vēlēt? ! Kur tu tādas domas ņēmi? ''

''Tu jau man nesaki to... to mīklu!'' Nelaimīgā līgava atkal izplūst asarās.

''Ak, to mīklu!'' Simsanam pēkšņi kļūst tik jautri, ka jāsmejas pie zemes liecoties. ''Tad tā mīkla tev nedod miera! Tad tu arī lauzi savu galviņu! Nu, nu, - kas tas ir: Plēsoņa paēdināja, stiprais saldināja? Nevari atminēt, ko? Bet tev jau nav jāatmin,'' Simsans piebilst, redzēdams, ka līgava nesmejas.

''Vīram un sievai nedrīkst būt nekādu noslēpumu,'' viņa saka.

''Bet tas jau nav noslēpums!''

''Ir gan!''

''Bet to jau es pat savam tēvam un mātei neesmu teicis.''

''Lai... tavam tēvam un tavai mātei jau arī nebūs jāsadeg!'' līgava atkal sāk raudāt.

''Jāsadeg? '' Simsans nevar saprast. ''Kāpēc jāsadeg? '' Bet tad viņam uzaust gaisma. ''Vai... šie stulbie mīklas minētāji tev draudēja? ''

Līgava krata galvu. Tātad - jā. Nu, to viņš šiem stulbeņiem nepiedos.

''Viņi solījās manas tēva mājas nodedzināt un mūs pašus līdz. Mīļais tēvs... mīļais...''

''Un tāpēc tu man prasi, lai v i ņ i e m pateiktu? '' Simsanam pēkšņi šai istabā sāk trūkt gaisa.

''N...nē, nē jel!'' saka līgava, asaras slaucīdama un savas rokas atkal puisim kaklā uzmezdama.

''Pagaidi,'' saka Simsans, atbrīvodamies.

''Nāc, apsēdīsimies. Es arī mīlu savus vecākus, un es priecājos, ka tu mīli savējos. Bet nebaidies. Taviem vecākiem nekas ļauns nenotiks, to es tev apsolu. Un ja tu apsolies nevienam nestāstīt, es tev arī mīklu izstāstīšu, bet, dzirdi - nevienam...''

''Nevienam,'' čukst līgava un laistās kā varavīksne.

''Nemaz nezinu, kā sākt... tas jau vesels stāsts. Nu, sākšu ar to dienu, kad mēs ar tēvu un māti nācām tevi bildināt. Bijām gan visi izgājuši reizē, bet man tā iešana tā labāk veicās - negribējās tieši pa karsto laiku... Un kad nu es tā eju, tur, zini, pie jūsu vīna laukiem, man pilnīgi negaidot uzbrūk lauva...''

''Un tu man nekā neteici!''

''Nē, nebija jau nekasbriesmīgs. Mazs lauvēns! Tāds nu - laba kaķa lielumā. Nebiju ne labi rokās paņēmis, kad - beigts bija.''

''Ko, tu nožņaudzi? Kailām rokām? ''

''Nē.'' saka Simsans, nokaunējies. ''Pārplīsa...! Bet ļauj man stāstīt. Negribēdams māti uztraukt, ievilku turpat niedrās un nekā neteicu. Bet kad pirms nedēļas nācu uz kāzām, domāju: sak, jāpaskatas, kas ar to manu lauvēnu noticis. Ko domā - kaulus vien atradu. Un galvas kausā bites...''

''Bites? ''

''Jā, bites! Izņēmu veselu kāri un nācu pirkstus sūkādams. Vēl tēvam un mātei iedevu. Patiesībā jau... tev nesu. Bet tu nerādījies. Greznojies. Atceries - saucu, klauvēju pie loga, bet tu dzini prom...''

''Tad - medus ir tas saldinātājs un stiprais - lauva? ''

''Jā,'' saka Simsans. ''Protams.''

Septiņas dienas svin Simsans savas kāzas. Septiņas dienas koklētāji strinkšķina savas kokles un bundzinieki bungā savas bungas. Septiņas dienas tēvi cilā viņa kausus un mātes šķetina savas valodas. Bet

septītās dienas vakarā bundzinieki atgrūž savas bungas un tēvi savus vīna kausus. Dejotāji palaiž viens otra roku un mātes aizmet mezglu savām valodām. Nu Simsans pateiks savu mīklu.

Bet nekā!

Trīsdesmit lepni vīlistiešu puiši stāv un smīn: Domāji - neatminēsim? Gādā nu tikai tos trīsdesmit goda svārkus, ko mums gribēji novilkt... Bet varbūt, ka pats nevari savu mīklu atminēt. Puiši, uzdosim mēs viņam savu! Kas ir saldāks par medu un stiprāks par lauvu? Nu, mini nu!

Simsans nobāl. Lūk, turpat stāv viņa līgava. Bet viņš nevar uz to paskatīties. Kā uguns vairīdamies, viņš aizliek acīm priekšā roku. Roka dreb: tas mīļākais cilvēks viņu ir nodevis. - Ne viņš, ne viņa vecāki vīnu nedzer. Māte zin stāstīt - tā viņai kāds Dieva vīrs esot licis. Simsans esot Dieva izredzēts, ar Simsanu Dievam esot īpaši nodomi. Taču kad viņš tagad runā, viņam mēle pinas:

''N-nu, ja... jūs... pār... manu sētu nebūtu kāpuši, manu m-mīklu jūs n-nebūtu atminējuši. Bet savus trīsdesmit goda svārkus jūs dabūsiet jau rīt. Valkājiet veseli uh... paliekiet veseli! Nāc tēvs, nāc māte - iesim!''

* * *

Ir tādi ļaudis, kas visu zina. Tie arī zina stāstīt, ka Simsans savu solījumu tiešām izpildījis. Tai pašā naktī viņš iebrucis naidīgo askaloniešu novados, pieveicis vajadzīgo skaitu vīru un atnesis viņu svārkus uz savas līgavas māju. Tikai vienu šie ļaudis piemirsuši: turpat šiem trīsdesmit svārkiem līdzās bija nolikta arī tukša medus kāre.

MŪSU DIENĀS - TUVU UN TĀLUMĀ

DARBS BĒGĻU LABĀ

LUTERAŅU pasaules federācija Minchenē 1949.g. ierīkoja sevišķu spiestuvi Bēgļu palīdzības dienesta (Service of refugees) vajadzībām. Līdz pag.gada beigām šinī spiestuvē bija izgatavoti dažāda veida iespieddarbi ar pāri par 3 milj. lapām. Iespieddarbi veikti latviešu, angļu, igauņu, lietuviešu, ukraiņu, ungāru un vācu valodā. Sarp citu šinī spiestuvē izgatavots arī garīgo dziesmu krājums ar dziesmām vairākās valodās, kuŗu lietoja dievkalpojumos Gronas baznīcā.

VAI BAZNĪCAS UZPLAUKUMS KRIEVIJĀ?

Čikagas svētdienas vakaru klubs (Chicago Sunday Evening Club) laikam gan ir viens no interesantākajiem pasākumiem visā Amerikā. Organizēts 1907. gadā kristianisma iedzīvināšanai Čikagas veikalu rajonā un pilsētas morāliskās un reliģiskās dzīves veicināšanai, par savu pēdējo gadu devīzi klubs izraudzījies cīņu pret kaŗu, komūnismu un noziedzībām. Katru svētdienas vakaru tur čikagiešiem dota iespēja dzirdēt ''tagadnes lielākos reliģiskos vadoņus.''

2.martā tur vārds bija dots kādreizējam vācu zemūdenes komandierim un Hitlera režīma upurim Dr.M. Nīmeleram (Niemoeller), kas tikai janvārī atgriezies no Maskavas un jau februārī izkāpis Amerikas krastā, Ņujorkas korrespondentiem, tā sakot, pirmajā elpas atņēmienā paguva paskaidrot, ka protestantiem katoliskajā Spānijā klājoties nesalīdzināmi grūtāk, kā kristiešiem Padomju savienībā. Pēdējā, lūk, kristiešus vienkārši uzskatot par muļķiem, turpretī pirmajā tie skaitoties par hairetiķiem un potenciāli bīstamu elementu.

Čikagas svētdienas vakaru klubā (sarīkojumi publiski, notiek vienā no skaistākajām Čikagas koncertu zālēm - Orchestra Hall) N. vairāk kā 2000 klausītājiem paskaidroja vispirms par sava Maskavas apmeklējuma nolūkiem. Tādi bijuši galvenā kārtā divējādi: 1. veicināt mieru un 2. pārliecināties, vai baznīca aiz dzelzs priekškara tiešām ir kristīga baznīca. Cik lielā mērā N. brauciens uz Maskavu būs veicinājis mieru, pagaidām paliek nezināms. Bet interesanti ir viņa pieredzējumi Maskavā un aiz dzelzs priekškara, kur viņš, Maskavas patriarcha aicināts, uzturējies 6 dienas. Kristīgā baznīca, teica N., Krievijā neesot mirusi. Tieši pretēji - tā atdzimstot arvien vairāk. Apm. puse visas krievu tautas esot kristīga, un kristiešu skaits augot. Tā viņam lepni paskaidrojis Maskavas patriarchs. Baznīcas esot labi apmeklētas. To N. pats pieredzējis, piedalīdamies gan baptistu, gan pareizticīgo (Ziemassvētku naktī, no 6. uz 7. janvāri) dievkalpojumos. Padomju savienībā esot 3.200.000 baptistu, bez tam arī luteraņi Latvijā un Igaunijā. Kādas valsts attiecības pret baznīcu? - Iecietīgas, ne labvēlīgas. Pret rietumu baznīcām padomju kristieši esot aizdomīgi. Tās uzskatot par propogandas ieroci. Vārdu sakot - nav ko uztraukties. Šai ziņā Padomju savienībā ja nu vēl nav gluži -, tad gandrīz viss kārtībā. Bet tādas un līdzīgas ziņas no rietumu cilvēkam absolūti nesaprotamās mūsdienu ''aizsaules'' zemes pārveduši daudzi ceļotāji. Lūgtiem viesiem tur allaž klājas apbrīnojami labi. Citādi ir tiem, kam tur jādzīvo. Un nezin, kā tādā gadījumā klātos arī pašam N. (protams, ja viņam neizdotos avansēt kaut vai līdz tādam amatam, kā mūsu Turam, kas gan, ievērojot N. drošsirdīgo nostāju Hitlera režīma laikā, maz ticams) - vai viņš jau pirmajā dienā neprasītos uz briesmīgo Spāniju. Bet velti. ''Mīļam'' viesim priekškars paceļas gan, bet ne ''brīvajam'' pilsonim.

Z.A.S. valstīs N. ieradies Florīdas misionāru biedrību (Florida Chain of Missionary Assemblies) aicināts un, runas sacīdams, apbraukāšot visu Amerikas kontinentu. To N. tiešām var. Viņš runā teicamā angļu valodā.

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Līdz pag. gada 31. decembrim Luterāņu bēgļu izvietošanas dienests (Lutheran Resettlement Service) bija palīdzējis nokļūt 30.647 pārvietotām personām Z.A.S. Valstīs. Šis skaits nav galīgs, jo šeit jāpieskaita kādi pāris simtu to DP, kas vīzas saņēma decembŗa pašās pēdējās dienās un U.S.A. ieradās šī gada sākumā.

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AMERIKĀŅU ARTAVA BAZNĪCAI

Amerikāņu baznīcām viņu draudžu locekļu artava gadā sastāda ap 2 biljoni dolāru. Protestantu baznīcās draudzes loceklis gadā caurmērā devis savai baznīcai $32.33, rēķinot tikai luterāņus-apm.$45.-Pēdējos tālu pārspēj dažas citas denominacijas. Tā brīvie metodisti caurmērā ziedojuši baznīcai katrs $163.76 gadā, septītās dienas adventisti - $143.11

ARABU UN KOREJIESU BEGĻI

Palestīnā rēķina ap 800.000 arabu bēgļu, kas ir nesenā žīdu un arabu militārā konflikta mantojums. Korejas kaŗa rezultātā pārvietoto personu skaits sasniedz ap 5 milj. Pag. mēnesī amerikāņu baznīcas rīkoja plašu ziedojumu vākšanu, lai palīdzētu atvieglot šo nelaimīgo likteni.

ARĪ TĀ VAR PALĪDZET SAVAI BAZNĪCAI

Ohaio steitā kāds 10 gadus vecs skolnieks divu gadu laikā savācis 2 tonnas papīra atkritumu un ieņemto naudu nodevis savai baznīcai iekšējās misijas vajadzībām. Piemērs, kam varētu sekot arī citi jaunieši! J. ST.

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Pastor G. Straumanis John 2:19-23

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE TEMPLE

"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." What a word! What a thorough conviction! What man would dare say it? To raise the temple that was built in a period of seven years, at which building thousands of men had taken part! Is not this merely boldness, if not using stronger expression? In three days?! As well one could probably say: "Destroy this world and in three days I will raise it up." And why should they destroy it? Was the temple not the house of God, was it not built for God, wherein God was dwelling? Were not the tables of God's law in its most holy place, the tables which were given by God to His servant Moses on Sinai? How could Jesus say: "Destroy it"? Was He not also a human being, like others? Was not Joseph His father, Mary His mother - very well known people to all of them?

Jesus, however, had spoken about the temple of His body. He knew that they would destroy it. And they did destroy it; they destroyed it on Good Friday, on Golgotha. They destroyed the unique, the true house of God, the most beautiful, the most precious that has ever been on earth, the living temple, wherein God Himself in His abundance was dwelling, where there was no shortcoming or imperfection. That was the temple made by God and given to men in order that they would come to the truth and to the light. They, however, did not know him; they did not like it either. They preferred building up the tower of Babel, which they still are building - higher and higher, a gray and cold stony structure without any animation, spirit or soul. They rather preferred dwelling in this their tower than in the living house of God.

And so they destroyed this temple; they demolished it completely. They buried, they hid their Lord in a dark rocky cave in order that nobody would find and awake Him, so that they could enjoy a happy-go-lucky way and continue the building of their tower - with slaves, poor ones, and with oppressed human souls. On Good Friday they rejoiced, laughed, pointed with their fingers: "Behold, there is the destroyer of the temple. If you are so mighty, climb down from the cross, come out of the sepulchre and raise up your temple, just as you said - in three days! Then we probably will dwell there..."

And He raised it up. Early in the morning of the third day, at daybreak, Jesus woke up and came out of the tomb. There was not a single man among the servants of darkness who would have believed that. They fell down on their faces, they covered their faces with their hands, they fled, they hid and cringed into the caves of rocks. The Son of God in the might of the creating spirit of the almighty God awoke when the sun was rising above a new earth and from a new sky. The temple of Christ was raised - more beautiful, more marvellous than before - an eternal, an

immortal, an indestructible temple forever, in order that all who believe in Him would live and would raise up on the last Day - as a lasting joy and satisfaction to all the good spirits and men, to the sufferers, to the men in bonds, to those who are bent down. This temple was raised up, shining upon the world's highest mountain, so that they who are dwelling deep in the valley would never lose faith in the victory of light and life, so that they in this faith would have an inexhaustible source of endurance, of faith unto the end.

Nothing, nothing indeed could be a hindrance for this salvation's work of God - neither the lie of the Pharisees, nor the Roman arms, nor the threat and curse of the hell itself. Their undertakings remind us of the fools of the story, who, building up a new town hall, forgot the windows....

* *

Friends, there is not a single event in the whole history of the world that is mightier and more significant than Christ's resurrection on Easter. There is not a single event with a similar influence on the course of history of mankind and in its inspiration, especially in the time of sorrows and suffering. We have had great men, spiritual giants, who have left a great heritage to mankind and culture, but they have passed away and in a certain degree are already forgotten. There is no one who would say, "I shall not die!" and would not die. Christ is the exception; He is the first among the dead, who is risen, who has appeared to many and who may say: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." "Believest thou this?" Jesus asked Martha. And she answered, "Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God!" Let us also say, "Yea, Lord: we believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior to the world!" For it is better to believe than not to believe, it is better to testify than to deny, it is better to live than to die. Therefore we believe. And our belief has been awakened and testified by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, by His words and deeds - every year again and again.

* *

"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." God raised it up in Jesus Christ, in His Church, which has been built of living, precious stones. And there are people again who want to destroy it, and in doing that to destroy also the whole Christian world and culture. These destructive-minded people are the communists, anarchists, nihilists, materialists, capitalists, existentialists, and pessimists. They tear off everything they can reach and as much as they can. They tear off and destroy by lie, by fraud, money, force, war, curse and promises. Nevertheless, they shall not destroy it!

They shall not come through! as the apostle Paul says, and as Marshall Foch said at Verdun in a fatal moment for France. They shall not come through, they shall not destroy! For, this time the temple is built indestructible for human hands. "For this world's prince may still scowl fiercely, as he will, We need not be alarmed, For he is not disarmed; One little word o'erthrows him."

This is our belief and it is better than their unbelief - any way. This is the belief that we need today, that faith that strengthens us, that faith that shall give strength to our suffering people and to the whole suffering world to endure, to remain and to wait for the Dawn of Resurrection.

* * *

Provost Kr. Valters

THE GOOD FRIDAY STORY

"My brother, go to Golgotha!" "Go to the Cross with thy sorrows, you tired pilgrim!" These verses of our anthems are very familiar to all of us. On Good Friday they have a special meaning. They invite the whole Christian church to start the pilgrimage to the place of Christ's suffering. If, receiving this invitation, together with the whole attendance of Good Friday, we go to the remote hill of suffering in order to observe with our spiritual and faithful eyes the events which took place from the 6th to the 9th hour, then observing this mighty, unforgettable scene, recorded in such simple, nevertheless divine, words of the evangelist, we may also today:

1) Watch the men round the Cross,
2) Observe the Savior upon the Cross, and
3) Anticipate God above the Cross.

1) If we stop at the Cross we can see the saved and the unsaved men. Here on the morning of Good Friday the Savior is escorted to the place of execution by Jews and Romans, by men of most different classes, by curious observers and by fearful friends. Here are criminals who are crucified and punished together with Christ, but here are also the leaders of the nation - the judges and the priests. Here are cruel men who have become dull in bloody battles, and here are silent, meek women, who had followed Jesus already from Galilee. It is a crowd which one can find everywhere, in all places, in ancient times as well as now.

When observing these men round the Cross with a fearful and desperate heart we at first notice how wicked, base and morose a man can sometimes become. A man here raises his hand in order to nail on the cross the holy and innocent one. A man here grins at the torture and the struggle with death of the pure in heart. A man as if on behalf of God here kills Him who was sent by God! One thing more should be noticed: these men do not belong to a city's mob to released scoundrels. They who slander, they who despise the dying one and who destroy the good and the divine, they are the most outstanding, most prominent persons: the priests, the pious representatives of their nation. Behold, like this is a man, no matter how rich, educated, well-fed and "moral", but - unsaved. And like this the unsaved man is still today, though having attended schools, having read books, having enjoyed the arts and having seized a huge, immense might in his hands. Let us recall but the concentration camps, where a man has not only captured, locked in his fellow man like an animal, but where he has started to use him as raw material. Let us recall the grandest leader of our era, Mahatma Gandhi, who was cruelly and cold-bloodedly assassinated by an intolerant and narrow-minded opponent. It seems that man can be changed neither by art, nor by knowledge, nor by education. He is captured as if by an obscure, demoniacal force. We can train and cultivate his mind, but he himself does not become brighter, more holy; he cannot get rid of the power of sin and the devil.

Looking more closely, however, among those men who escorted Christ to Golgotha, and rage, blaspheme and grin, we notice some who adore, who receive salvation, light and grace in their prayers. Simon of Cyrene, who carried Christ's cross, here experiences the blessing of the Cross; the murderer from the terrible place of execution here goes to the bright heavens; and the centurion here testifies with his whole heart: "Truly this was the Son of God." All these are the saved men, pulled

out of the darkness, men on their way to heaven, to life divine, men who belong to God. And to this they have been converted only in this hour at Golgotha when looking at Christ, having met Him who suffers and dies upon the Cross.

2) Christ upon the Cross. He did not want to govern. He did not come here in order to distribute bread and to dictate wise, good laws. Neither was it his aim to get into His possession a state or land, nor to gather riches and enjoy His life. Christ wanted more. He wanted to capture human hearts for God. To get human hearts, however, is the most difficult, the greatest task. It cannot be performed by the brightly gifted commander-in-chief, no matter how large would be his army; it can be performed neither by the sharpest sword, nor by the most despotic force. It can be performed only by love that gives and sacrifices its dearest.

I read once about an event during the Revolution in Russia. The Bolsheviks had captured many hundreds of officers, cadets and undergraduates. In order to threaten others they had decided to shoot every third or fourth of the captives. They ordered all of them to stand in a long row. One of the executors counted and at each third or fourth count a gun-shot resounded. At the very end of the row there were standing shoulder to shoulder a young cadet and an old priest. Following with his eyes the execution, the priest noticed that his young friend had to die. Soon the old man's decision was made. He pushed the youth aside, took the youth's place and a few minutes later collapsed, shot dead at the lad's feet. Now the youth realized what the priest had done. He realized that he had been rescued, still living for another one had died in his stead, and gave his word to himself to live a life that would be worth this sacrifice.

He who climbs up to Golgotha and stands at Christ's cross, sees: here Christ has been executed in my stead, here He dies in my stead, in order that I might live. Therefore we feel the truth expressed in the following verse time and again:

"Thou conquered my heart
And took my heart from me,
Through Thy great suffering,
O Lord, on Calvary."

Our dull, stony hearts too can be conquered only by the "Great Suffering Man" on Calvary, for only there our selfishness can be broken, our bonds rent and our pride afflicted - by God's love.

3) However, when considering the evangelist's story about the events of Good Friday, we are thinking not only about men around the Cross and about our Savior upon the Cross - we are remembering also God in heaven, who by mighty signs bears witness to the world, that He knows about the happenings on Golgotha. We read that the earth quaked, the sun became dim and the veil of the temple was rent in twain. Above the Cross in heaven there is God who does care what is going on in this world. He does not turn away from this earth, full of darkness, unjustice and cruelty. Even more He testifies as the Lord who governs and shall govern, who orders and shall order forever the historical destinies and who will bring to an end all His intentions. Men raise up crosses, they dig graves, they weave veils and block the roads with stones, but God rends those veils, He opens those graves in order to bring His people from disaster and death into life and prosperity. So already in the evening of Good Friday we feel the nearness of Easter and at Christ's cross, knowing ourselves to be saved, peacefully and faithfully we can wait for the day of Resurrection.

* * *

Pastor V. Mezaraups

THE LIVING WORD

(Penitential Sermon)

On a hot summer day I was roving in a half-destroyed city in Germany. I was excited. My heart was full of anxiety and sorrow. In a small flower garden I noticed beautiful roses. They were grown weary because of the heat, and the blossoms turned down. On one of the blossoms, however, I saw a dew drop. Could one dew drop refresh the blossom? Nevertheless... The petals near this dew drop looked fresher. It shone on the blossom as a heavenly gift. Then the words of the gospel came to my mind: Say the word, and my servant shall be healed. Could a word refresh a thirsty soul? Nevertheless... A thirsty soul is longing for a word, for a kind, dear, sweet word.

Friend, say but a word - say it about my beloved ones who are separated from me, about my beloved ones who are covered by the shadow of death; say a word about my father, mother, husband and wife, brother, sister, - say a word about my child; one word about the land of my desire, about my native land, - a word which would throw a beam of hope into my heart, a word which would enlighten it; one word that reconciliates me with the man who dropped bitterness into the cup of my life, one word of forgiveness of a person whom I have hurt.

Nevertheless, if a man would say to us even the dearest word, if the soul is suffering from sin, trespasses before God, a human word cannot comfort. In this case only He who suffered and died for our sake can comfort, He who loved us with an eternal love, He who said, "I and my Father are one. No one comes to the Father but by me." In the hardships of life He says unto us, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28). When we are mourning for our deceased relatives, He has a word for us: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." If the burden of sin depresses us, He has a word: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee" (Matt. 9:2), or: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." Let us kneel before the bright Savior and let us ask this living word!

* * *

Dr. K. Bilzens

THE REVELATION OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

When testifying about the empty sepulchre of Jesus Christ in the morning of the first day of the week (or: "the third day" after Good Friday), as well as the self-testimony of the awakened Jesus Christ in visions and words (cf. I Cor. 15:3....; Luke 24:17...; Matt. 28:9...; John 20:15...; 21:5...;Acts 9:4...; 26:14) in the new reality of life, the New Testament in a faithful veneration covers the transcendent work of God the Father that no man had ever experienced and that does not undergo any human experience or conception. At the same time it reveals this secret: God awakened the crucified and buried man, Jesus. How does this transcendent event reveal itself immanently and historically? The New Testament answers: Jesus Christ has appeared Himself; He has born witness about Himself as a living one to His disciples; He has revealed that secret of God which men themselves cannot reveal.

Starting personal (I, Thou) relations with His desciples, binding them in a living faith (in actu fidei) with Himself, Jesus Christ awakened in His disciples the insight of faith that provided the disciples with the ability to make faithful decisions. However, besides the testimony that the disciples experienced and noticed the self-revelation and self-testimony of the awakened Jesus Christ, visualizing Him in an experience and in an insight of faith, the New Testament also testifies that this self-revelation and self-testimony of Jesus Christ was available for the sensible experience and conception of the disciples, too. The insight of faith testifies that the disciples saw the awakened Jesus Christ not only in a sight of faith, but also objectively with their eyes. The insight of faith bears witness that the disciples heard the awakened Jesus Christ not only in faith, but also objectively with their ears. The awakened Jesus Christ in His visions was to His faithful disciples also a reality outside the disciples, a reality of a sensitive and objective touch in the reality of the heavenly glory.

Making the attempt of answering the questions of the resurrection and self-testimony of Jesus Christ, where the aspirations have been involved in finding out "where?", "how?" and "what kind?", the testimonies of the New Testament become obviously reserved. The new reality of life of the awakened Jesus Christ is as if immanent and transcendent at the same time. In order to avoid the human aspirations of finding out through wanting to express the inexpressible, the awakening (resurrection) of Jesus Christ, the transcendent (eschatological) work of God in immanence (history), the New Testament does homage to the Head of the Church in hymns:

"Christ was put to death in the flesh, but
quickened by the Spirit!" (I Peter 3:18)

Christ "was manifested in the flesh,
justified in the Spirit,
seen of angels,
preached unto the Gentiles,
believed on in the world,
received up into glory." (I Tim. 3:16)

Recording about the visions of the quickened Jesus Christ, where the disciples experienced the living Jesus Christ in an objective, clear likeliness with that Jesus of the earthly life though in a reality of heavenly glory, the New Testament testifies also about the gospel of the quickened Jesus Christ that the living Jesus Christ presented when revealing and testifying Himself to His disciples in visions. The disciples bear witness in the New Testament that they not only truly saw the quickened Jesus Christ, but that they also truly heard Him. The living Jesus Christ talked to and with the disciples.

The deepest insight of faith of a Christian human being in the light of Easter probably is this, that without the Easter message of the quickened Jesus Christ the whole earthly life of Jesus Christ, the cross of Golgotha, the empty sepulchre, the visions, etc. - in a word, the whole revelation of God in the past and future - would remain as separate inconceivable events with a question mark! The living Jesus Christ Himself expressed in words everything that had happened (Luke 24:17...; Matt. 28:9...; John 20:14...). So He presented the understanding of the Holy Scriptures to the disciples (Luke 24:45). Beneath the cross of Golgotha the disciples could see the "seal" of God; in the crucified Savior the King of life was revealed; "the death which Christ undergoes is life." The crucified Jesus Christ already upon His cross is the victor. Those hands that had done only good in life,

already when upon the Cross of Golgotha truly blessed those who were under the Cross for a new hope of Easter. The Cross of Good Friday is irradiated by the sun of Easter.

The words of Jesus Christ made it possible for the disciples to experience the self-revelation of the crucified and quickened Jesus Christ as God's revelation; they made it possible for the disciples to approach their transcendent reality of life, they made it possible for them to anticipate the transcendent awakening (resurrection, quickening), that had occurred behind the opened, empty sepulchre, namely the great work of God. Already the message of resurrection proclaimed by the angels at the empty sepulchre was a revelation of God, that bearing testimony of itself made the eyes and ears capable of experiencing the reality of God's world. As the angels rejoiced, proclaiming God's miraculous work, namely the birth of Christ, at the beginning of the historical life of Jesus Christ, so now they are rejoicing in proclaiming the concluding miracle of God about the earthly life of Jesus Christ, namely, the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

What is the quickening, or rather resurrection, of Jesus Christ? Awakening Him who was crucified and who died upon the Cross, Jesus, and exalting Him in His heavenly glory at His "right hand" (Acts 7:55; Rom. 8:34; cf. Mark 14:62) God said His "No!" to those who crucified Him and His "Yes!" to the Crucified (Acts 2:23,24, 31-33; 3:15; 4:10; etc., Rom. 4:24; I Cor. 15:15; Phil. 2:9-11; Eph. 1:20...; etc.) God made Jesus the Lord of heaven and earth (Acts 2:36; cf. Matt. 28:18). Exalting His Son (who in His whole earthly life was the Son, but unknown, ("emptied," "in the form of a servant," "in weakness"; cf. II Cor. 13:4; Phil. 2:7,8; Hebr. 2:14; 5:2) God the Father made Him (again) the Son of God in might (cf. Rom. 1:4; Phil. 2:9...; John 17:5; I Tim. 3:16).

The gospel of the quickened Jesus Christ (or the "gospel of the forty days"), it seems, was much larger than the words that we find written in our New Testament. Besides the fact that the quickened Jesus Christ explained His earthly life, the Cross, His resurrection and His visions, also a reliable fact is His indication about His further self-revelation and self-testimony, namely, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit (i.e., the Holy Spirit which goes out of the Father and of the Son) at Pentecost and about the revelation of the Holy Spirit in the Christian church.

It is not possible to find out how far the risen Jesus Christ Himself led His disciples in the understanding of His resurrection and its meaning and where the light of the fire of the Spirit of Pentecost begins, but the testimony of the New Testament is indisputable, that on Easter as well as on Pentecost the disciples received the Easter message as well as the Holy Spirit of the quickened and exalted Jesus Christ. It made it possible for them to have a look into the history of God's revelation and to understand it in the past and in the future (eschatology).

The living Jesus Christ personally and in the Holy Spirit offered the living testimonies of faith to the disciples (apostles) and to the early church. As pneumatic (not static) testimonies they have been written in the New Testament. These testimonies of faith of the New Testament want to lead up to the risen and exalted Jesus Christ, who in the Holy Spirit in the gospel of Easter wants to testify Himself in His reality of life and in the heavenly glory also "now" and "here."

* * *

Hymn: "Rock of Ages," translated by prof. K. Kundzins.

* * *

Leonids Breikss

MY RETURN TO CHRIST

Moses

I began reading the Bible from its very beginning with Moses and the Pentateuch. And though I did not like the nation from which Moses descended, nevertheless time and again I had to admit in my thoughts that he was a wise man indeed. For I read some recent books on what the modern scientists had written about peoples and their flesh and blood, and I saw that Moses was already familiar with all those things.

However, the more I listened to Moses, the more Christ became a stranger to me. I did not realize immediately that Christ came in order to build in a way in which Moses never built, and in order to build things which Moses did not build. I did not realize that Christ came to build spiritually, to build the divine in men. For Moses was a cattle breeder; Christ, however, was the Son of God. Moses taught the inheritance and maintenance of the earth; Christ, however, the inheritance of heaven. I really thought that he who shall maintain the earth shall also maintain heaven. And therefore I liked him. Nevertheless, this spirit urged me on to deny Christ again.

So, living in such an atmosphere and believing and writing like that, I noticed that a certain light and blessing disappeared in my life. My mother told me that I became cruel and that I did not know mercy either upon myself upon others. And I said, "Wasn't it right? Shouldn't we have such insight betimes? Shouldn't we learn betimes to live and to prepare for the eternal mortal combat? That is the only way for maintaining the earth! However, Christ, whom you remind me of time and again, does not teach that. If we want to maintain the earth we have to refuse Christ, for heaven without earth is but an idle dream."

This time mother did not say a word. Perhaps she thought I was too obsessed. One thing, however, she begged me again: "Do you remember your promise? That you would not write against Christ?"

I almost regretted that I had given my word; nevertheless I replied, "I remember!"

* * *

Pastor E. Kiploks

PAUL GERHARDT AND HIS HYMNS

The Lenten season, especially Holy Week, is inconceivable without the hymn "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded." As soon as its first chords resound on Good Friday we visualize the Crucified, His head bent down in pain, His agony. This anthem can even touch an indifferent heart and lead it closer to the Great Sufferer.

Beneath it in our Hymnal there is its author's name, Paul Gerhardt. In the melody book one finds the name of the composer, Leo Hassler.

He who is familiar with the history of the Church would know that this anthem has been written following the example of an anthem that was very popular in the Middle Ages, "Salve Caput Cruentatum." It was a whole cycle of songs where the mystic with zealous words glorified his Savior in His painful hours upon the Cross. Having turned away from the rest of the world and being transferred in his spirit on Golgotha, he sees but His Lord, at first His feet, then His knees, raising up his head, His arms, side, chest, heart, and at last His head. For hours he observes each member of his Lord. He sees how men have smit Him, how they have broken or injured Him. He recalls that the feet of the Lord have never gotten tired in visiting the sinners; His hands have never gotten tired in blessing, His heart in loving, His head in carrying patiently the crown of thorns. He gazes at each member of his Lord and he salutes it in his spirit.

In this connection these songs were named "salves" because of the words with which they began. (The Latin word "salve" means "be greeted".) Their author, it was believed, was Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153), who had a great influence upon the spiritual life of the Middle Ages. Recent research, however, shows that their author should be searched for among the disciples of Bernard of Clairvaux; probably it was Arnulf of Luvena.

Paul Gerhardt is a man of a completely different disposition. He belongs to the era of Lutheran orthodoxy, when the most important thing seemed to be not an enthusiastic visualizing, but careful studies of the Scripture and pure doctrine. He was born on March 12, 1607, at Grafenhainchen near Wittenberg as the son of the burgomaster, but he lost his father soon. He grew up during the Thirty Years' War, entered the University of Wittenberg and was a private tutor for many years, for because of the war disaster there was no parish which could call a pastor. In the years of his tutorship he began writing poetry, more and more improving his form of expression. At last in 1651 he became pastor at Mittenwalde near Berlin.

At the bottom of the altar of this church there was a woodcarving with Christ's head and with the crown of thorns upon it. On the carving there were dark blood stains. Fourteen years before Gerhardt's arrival, Mittenwalde had been plundered by vagabonds. Provost Gallus Luther tried to stop them, but the vagabonds murdered him before the very altar. It seems the blood stains were left on the altar in order that they would remind the people of Mittenwalde of the horror of the past. The previous church attandants probably did not pay much attention to the carving, but now they observed it carefully. The longer the people watched it, the more they experienced the same thing that Bernard and his disciples had once experienced - the mystical fellowship with their Lord on Golgotha.

O sacred Head, now wounded,
With grief and shame weighed down,
Now scornfully surrounded,
With thorns Thine only crown!
Once reigning in the highest
In light and majesty,
Dishonored now Thou diest,
Yet here I worship Thee.

At this experience Gerhardt also had his share. The strong man of the pure doctrine became enthusiastic. So came into existence the seven Lutheran salves, among them the last, "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded," one of the most significant spiritual songs of all times, the hymn to the Man of Suffering.

In some respects Gerhardt himself also was a man of suffering. He not only knew the reality of the Thirty Years' War: of how little value the human life is, about which the psalmist says, "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more." (Ps. 103:15-16) This truth he himself had proved in his life. When he, at 48, became a father, in a short time he lost his four children, his beloved wife and his other relatives. Therefore in all his songs there resounds the tragedy of his time and of his personal life - the thoughts of eternity. Having saluted His Savior's head, bent in pain, he prays:

Forbid that I should leave Thee;
O Jesus, leave not me;
In faith may I receive Thee,
When death shall set me free.
When strength and comfort languish,
And I must hence depart,
Release me then from anguish
By Thine own wounded heart.

In the poetic life of Gerhardt the year 1657 was of great significance. Then he was called to be the pastor of the Nicholas parish at Berlin. It's organist was Johann Krueger, one of the most distinguished composers of Lutheran tunes in all times. Now in cooperation with Krueger the most beautiful hymns could be created, e.g, the Advent hymn "O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee" (unfortunately, the Latvians have a different tune for it).

The melody of "O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" has been borrowed from another hymn: "I Am On My Way To Heaven" (No. 666). Its author is Hans Leo Hassler (1564-1612), the organist of the wealthy Fuggers in Augsburg, later at the court of Prague. The melody was composed early in 1601 and previously was meant for a secular song, "My Heart Is Embarrassed." Used for the first time for a spiritual song, however, it was published already in the Hymnal at Gerlitz in 1613. How nicely this melody fits to the text of Gerhardt's song - as if Hassler had written his tune for this very song!

The end of Gerhardt's life was embittered. Frederick William of Brandenburg, the so-called Great Elector, a member of the Reformed Church, after an unsuccessful attempt at reaching an agreement between the Lutherans and Calvinists of Brandenburg by means of a debate, in 1664 prohibited by law polemics from pulpits and insisted that all the pastors sign a written promise. Gerhardt felt this requirement to be a limitation of evangelical freedom; therefore he refused to sign it. As a result, he was dismissed from his pastoral position at Berlin, where he worked as pastor for almost ten years and died on May 27, 1676. He was buried in the local church.

There comes a time for each poet when his songs are in the process of being forgotten, for the parish insists on more modern ones. There are only a few poets who become "classic," i.e., whose poems survive all eras. Gerhardt is one of them. In the present German Hymnal there are some 40 hymns by Gerhardt - more than by any other poet. In our Hymnal there are 25 of them. The hymns by Gerhardt one can find in all Lutheran hymnals. Let us take the English, the Swedish, the Finnish, or Hungarian Hymnals; we shall find examples of Gerhardt's Muse in all of them. A statement has been expressed that Gerhardt is supposed to be the greatest Lutheran poet.

"O Sacred Head, Now Wounded" was accepted into the Latvian Hymnal in 1740 or 1769. We do not know its translator. There have also been other translations,

e.g., the free translation by Vilhelsm Steineks, a Latvian, "O Face of Bloody Matter." Provost Karlis Kundzins relates in his memoirs that in the years around 1870, when he was a divinity student reading for holy orders at Steineks parish in Tukums, this hymn was sung during the Lenten time. Our present translation is a new edition of the same unknown translator who was mentioned previously; the revision was made by the editors of our Hymnal in 1921.

Among the other hymns by Gerhardt in our Hymnal there could be mentioned, "O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee" (No. 6, "I Stand Here at Thy Cradle, Lord" (No. 33), "Thousand Times I Am Thee Greeting" (No. 160 - another one of the seven salves), "O Enter, Lord, Thy Temple" (208), "I Will Sing My Maker's Praises" (337), "Commit Whatever Grieves Thee" (451). The last hymn has lost its peculiarity in its new edition in our Hymnal. In its original it is an acrostic, i.e., each of the verses begins with the words in turn from the sentence, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." (Ps. 37:5). In the previous translation its beginning was in accordance to that. Especially beautiful are the morning and evening hymns: "Wake Up and Praise Thy Savior" (550) and "The Restless Day Now Closeth" (574). In the latter especially, the peace of soul of "the men pure in hearts" of our grandfathers' generation has been expressed:

Now all the heav'nly splendor
Breaks forth in starlight tender
From myriad worlds unknown;
And man, the marvel seeing,
Forgets his selfish being,
For joy of beauty not his own.

* * *

Pastor K. Kronis

THE QUESTION OF THE EASTER MORN

When in the rural community in which I was born one was going to the church, ere the country-road climbed up to the hill of the church behind the river, it made a slight curvature in a huge coniferous forest on this side round a small plot. Ancient bodies mixed with dust there. Completed lives were put in rows there, like full reels on the shelves of a spinning mill. On Easter morning - bright with sunshine and fresh with the winds of spring - the spiritual eyes see there a carriage stopped on its way to the church. There are people familiar since childhood. While father, still in the carriage, is holding the reins, mother like a gray partridge runs uphill. She wants to put a handful of willow-catkins at a cross or just to stand for a while with her hands folded in meditation. Then the horse runs again. The drivers have to listen to the wonderful message about the resurrection.

Marked with the dark sign of death and with the cold cross of shadow of the depth of the earth on his shoulders a man goes day after day, making halt at the graves, dug in the soil and in his heart - in order to wipe off the tears; he is longing for life immensely, as a man dying of hunger for a dry slice of bread.

Why weepest thou? - asked the Easter morn.

Mary Magdalene heard this question twice: at first from the angels at the dark sepulchre of Christ and later from the living Lord Himself, she having approached

without noticing Him. Nevertheless, she was not weeping alone. Those two nights after Good Friday probably many wept secretly in the darkness of the night. They were people who felt their unhealed wounds burning, whose hearts were full of pain, who were athirst after righteousness, people who were expelled from humanity, who, too, wanted to meet their Savior, but who had not met Him yet. Like shadows they hid with their loneliness and like a shadow set upon their broken life was the question: To whom shall we go with our suffering of our life and of our soul? Who shall say to us a nice, dear word instead of blasphemy? Who shall stretch toward us a blessing hand and give of his righteousness when our righteousness has been taken away from us by the Pharisees and the scribes and trampled down by the foreigners?

Mary Magdalene knew her Savior. Who knows, for there is no place where it would have been written, how many of those who wept at Christ's sepulchre in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea and in places far away - recognized their living Savior on Easter morn and how many of them have recognized Him in the course of Church history, that had to be but an uninterrupted Easter. We too are supposed to be the people of Easter, though not without our Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, although we have experienced them. Have we, however, heard that some one would ask in the Easter morn, Why weepest thou?

That question we put to our friends and acquaintances when their houses have been entered by, and at their tables is sitting, the guest which no one invited - the life's sorrow. Nevertheless, everything we are able to say after that is only a learned politeness. When we, however, are addressed by Him who put aside all the transitoriness of life on Easter morn - like the wrapped napkin in his rocky sepulchre; when He repeats the same question, "Why weepest thou?" he really can comfort us, for He knows our true pains. For we really are suffering not because of that which we bury into the earth, so that often it seems that the sand was put not on the coffin but on our chest, not because of our unfinished, half-done, delayed, forgotten or never started work, but the uncertainty about eternity. We are depressed by fear of not having eternity. Therefore men are crying in the cemetery of their dead ones and in the cemetery of their heart.

And in order to reach it - with might of ours can naught be done. To grasp the great eternity in the tiny and transient earthly things - that is the unquenchable human thirst after immortality. For the human being has a correct feeling that without the eternal life there is no sense and reason to his earthly days also. But out of the intention to earn eternity the human spirit creates grand and beautiful works. Nevertheless, here too are rather close limitations. Everything is passing away. Everything has been covered by the oblivion like an overgrowing lake with the marshy moss. Everything is disappearing like a brook in the mountains in an avalanche. A man is struggling desperately like Jacob struggles once with his God in a dark night up to the dawn. He is struggling in order to cut off some golden whiles from eternity, so that they still would beam throughout many generations after him, and he bursts out in tears knowing that, being separated from their original cause, these tiny chips sooner or later will cease beaming. He weeps because of the transitoriness.

God permits all of us to follow Christ into the garden of Gethsemane and night. However, were these above us, like the outstretched angel's wings, the light of God, when we were struggling with the will of the Almighty in our soul? Have we not lost our way as if in night while struggling in our soul? Do we know the way to the Easter Morn? There are many who have tried to climb up the hill of Golgotha where Christ decided to climb once. Many have preferred returning. Some had to go because there was no other way left. Nevertheless, how many are they who across this place have reached the Easter morn?

God only knows what the hands will be that will lift us and carry us, and that will leave us in the shadow of death, will they be the hands of our dear ones or the hands of payed men? So the dead Jesus was lifted up by the hands of his friends, who loved Him in his life and who still loved Him in death. But when the Easter day dawned, Christ Himself came out of His grave, in order to demonstrate that life is more than death.

We cannot raise our beloved ones from their last sleep, we cannot breathe into their stiff lips a warm breath again, we cannot switch a new light of the world to their eyes, full of the sleep of death. No matter how great would be our love, how much we would suffer and how much we would believe - these things we cannot do. But when we hear a sweet voice that sounds like the chimes in the steeple on Easter morning, when we hear that voice that puts to us the same question as to the sad woman in the gospel, "Why weepest thou." then it seems we are listening to eternity itself. Then we do not need to shiver in the shadow of death in this life any more. The believer knows with Christ that life triumphs over death, that the latter is but a short while of darkness, but a heavy handful of cold dust. More than that is the divine part in each human being, the eternal, indestructible, uninterrupted "I"? Our Savior came in order to awaken and to remind us of that. He arose on Easter in order that eternity would arise in our consciousness, in order that this moment would be a bridge between this and the coming life, in order that no one who believes in Him should weep, neither in the cemetery of our dead ones nor in the cemetery of our hearts.

A great many things and dear ones have been buried beneath the cross in home land as well in strangeness. Many things are lost. Many men are fallen asleep without the sign of the Cross - young men, dear and beautiful dreams, the fruit of a hard work and their sweetness. All that has become cold ashes, fright and sorrow. But when there is no one, and when in the deepest sorrow we used to have to be alone, when it seems there is no one who would raise, comfort and strengthen: lo, as the voice in the Scripture the man of our time is asking: Why weepest thou? And he who has been addressed lifts up his eyes and sees that Christ is with him on the Easter morn. A bright garland of sunbeams instead of the crown of thorns is round His head and ther are sunbeams in His hands and looking at every one that has waited for Him with his dear eyes, He gives this light, in order that there would be no one that believes and that needs life and light, without the Easter brightness, for life is light.

Christ saves us from transitoriness. He gives back to everyone that eternity that one man lost once, already in the time of Paradise. And to those who on Easter morning rejoice about the resurrection from the sepulchre in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, in the living nature and in the human hearts, He gives a new assurance: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." (John 11:25,26)

* * *

II. The Wedding

When Summer already has grown weary carrying the burdens of the apple-tree and of the vine, there is Autumn coming near and laughing: "Drop it, drop it, dear! Don't you see, it is not worth while!" And he even pulls the Summer's sleeve: "Now, look, it will be easier for the tree, and for you." Having lost her temper, Summer really drops her load and departs. Autumn, however, stands and laughs: He, he!

Now it is the best time for a wedding. And that is what Samson has on his mind. His father has permitted, his mother has not prohibited and his bride has said "Yes." Well, what else? Of course - the players, of course - the dancers. Let them come! And the players play, the dancers dance; the bride, however, does not seem satisfied.

What on earth is the matter with the bride? As to the young man, he has a faint feeling; he knows even more: his bride is not the only one - - thirty young men are racking their young men's brains. Well, go ahead, go ahead! Nevertheless, you won't find out anyway.

Seven days the players are playing, and the dancers are dancing; seven days, thirty young men are trying to find out Samson's riddle, alas, in vain.

In the evening of the seventh day the bride takes the bridegroom's hand and leads him into her chamber.

"You wicked one," she says angrily, putting her arms round his neck.

"Why did you marry me, if you don't love me?"

What on earth does this mean? In such a trouble Samson has not been through in all his life. Even a lion on one's neck seems to be better. In that case one would know what to do at least. What else? Tears! Oh no, that much Samson cannot stand.

"Don't cry, please!" he says, quite bewildered. "I can't see you crying, and... and it is not convenient so."

"That's just what I thought," the bride sighs, letting down her arms and turning away. "Now I know: you hate me..."

"I say... I say...," Samson tries to justify himself. "Listen...I am...very much...in..."

"Where are you."

"...in love with you."

"Do you harm everybody with whom you are in love?"

"Me?! Harming you? What do you mean?"

"Well...you don't tell me that...that riddle!" The unhappy bride bursts out in tears again.

"Oh, you mean that riddde!" Samson is laughing, and laughing delightedly. "So it is the riddle that troubles you. So you are racking your brains too! Now, tell me, tell me - what is it: Out of the eater came forth food, and out of the strong came forth sweetness... What, you can't find out? Oh, but you don't have to," Samson adds when noticing that his bride has not the slightest intention of laughing.

"Between a man and his wife there can't be any secrets," she says.

"But that's not a secret!"

"It certainly is!"

"But I haven't told it even to my father and mother."

"It doesn't matter....Your father and your mother aren't supposed to be burnt!" the bride bursts out in tears once more.

"Supposed to be burnt?" Samson cannot understand. "Why should they?" Then something comes to his mind. "Did those fools threaten you?"

The bride nods. So - he is right. Well, now those fools are going to have a lesson.

"They said they will burn down my father's house as well as us ourselves. My dear father..."

"And that's the reason why you are asking me; so you are going to tell them?" Samson finds himself out of breath in this room.

"No, no! You don't understand," the bride says wiping off her tears and putting her arms round his neck again.

"Listen," says the groom, freeing himself.

"Come, let us have a seat. I, too, love my parents and I am really delighted in hearing that you love yours. But don't be afraid. I give you my word, nothing wrong will happen to your parents. And I am going to tell you that riddle, too, if you promise me that you won't tell it to anybody else; listen: no one should know it, except you."

"No one..." the bride whispers and beams like a rainbow.

"Well, if I knew the thing to begin with... It's quite a story. All right, I am going to begin with the day when we - my parents and I - went to sue for you. Though we left at the same time, I was much faster - you see I didn't want to walk in the heat... Well, I was about at your vineyards, when suddenly I was attacked by a lion."

"And you did not tell me!"

"No, there was nothing important. A little lion, well - just a big kitten. I hadn't even taken it in my hands and - dead it was."

"What? You choked it? With your bare hands?"

"No," says Samson, ashamed. "It got torn... But let me continue. Because I didn't want to alarm my mother I pulled it into the reeds and didn't say a word. Nevertheless, when coming to the wedding a week ago, I thought: Well, let me have a look at that kitten. And what did I see - nothing but the bones, and in the skull - there were bees..."

"Bees?"

"Yes, bees! I took a honey-comb out of it and went all my way sucking my fingers. I even gave it to my father and to my mother. As a matter of fact I brought it... to you. But you did not appear. You trimmed up yourself. Remember - I called you, I knocked at your window, but you drove me away..."

"So that's it! Honey is the sweetness and the strong one is - a lion?"

"Yes," says Samson. "Certainly."

Seven days the wedding of Samson lasts. Seven days the harpers strike their harps and the drummers beat their drums. Seven days the fathers lift up their wine cups and mothers wind off their conversations. On the evening of the seventh day, however, the drummers push off their drums, and the fathers their cups. The dancers let loose each other's hand and the mothers make a knot in their conversations. Now Samson is going to declare his riddle.

Nevertheless, something else happens.

Thirty haughty young Philistine men stand and grin: You thought we wouldn't find out? What about you? Will you bring now those thirty linen garments which you wanted from us? But probably you yourself can't declare your riddle. Fellows, let us put forth our riddle unto him. What is sweeter than honey and what is stronger than a lion? Well, can you find it out?

Samson grows pale. Behold, there is his bride standing. But he cannot look at her. As if avoiding fire, he shadows his face with his hand. His hand trembles: the dearest human being has betrayed him. Neither his parents nor he drinks wine. His mother would say that a certain man of God has commanded her to do so. Samson was supposed to be a man chosen by God. God was supposed to have special intentions with Samson. Nevertheless, when Samson is talking now, his tongue stumbles:

"W-well, if...you...had not looked over my fence, you had not f-find out my r-riddle. Nevertheless you will get your garments and already tomorrow morning. Good luck to you and...goodbye! Father come, come mother - let us go!"

There are people who know everything. They also know that Samson really has realized his promise. In the same night he went down to the hostile region of Ashkalon, overpowered the necessary number of men, and brought their garments to his bride's house. There is but one thing that those people seem to have forgotten: beside those thirty garments there was also an empty honey-comb laid down.

* * *

A CHURCH REVIVAL IN RUSSIA?

The Chicago Sunday Evening Club probably is one of the most interesting enterprises in all America. Organized in 1907 to maintain services of Christian inspiration and fellowship in the business center of Chicago and to promote the moral and religious welfare of the city, as its slogan in recent years the Club has chosen the struggle against war, communism and crime, and through the club each Sunday evening the Chicagoans enjoy the privilege of hearing "today's great religious leaders."

For March 2, the speaker was the former German submarine commander and victim of the Hitler regime, Dr. M. Niemoeller, who, having returned from Moskow just in January and having come to America's shore already in February, told the newsmen of New York, so to say, in one deep breath, that Christians are much better off in Russia than Protestants in Catholic Spain. In the Soviet Union Christians are regarded as fools; however in Spain, he said, the Protestants are regarded as heretics and potentially dangerous.

In the Chicago Sunday Evening Club (the arrangements are public, and they are held in one of the most beautiful concert halls of Chicago - Orchestra Hall) Niemoeller informed more than 2,000 attendants at first about the intentions of his visit to Moskow. They were mainly twofold, he said: 1) to promote peace, and 2) to ascertain whether the Church behind the iron curtain really was a Christian church. How much his visit in Moskow will promote peace, remains unknown for the time being. However, very interesting are his experiences in Moskow and behind the iron curtain, where he spent six days, being invited by the patriarch of Moskow. The Christian church in Russia, said Niemoeller, is not dead. On the contrary, it is reviving more and more. About half of all the Russian people are Christians, and the number of Christians increases. This proud statement was given to him by the patriarch. The church attendance is good. He himself saw that, for he took part in the Baptist as well as in the Orthodox (on Christmas night, from the 6th to the 7th of January) services. There are 3,200,000 Baptists in the Soviet Union, and beside them also are Lutherans in Latvia and Estonia. What are the relations between the state and the church? The church has been tolerated, not favored. The Soviet Christians are suspicious of the Western churches. They think that the Western churches are but an instrument for propaganda. In a word, there is no reason for being excited. In this respect, everything in the Soviet Union is, if not quite, then almost all right. This and similar news from the modern, and to the man of the Western Hemisphere, absolutely strange "other world," however, has been brought by many travellers. The invited guests always feel remarkably well there. It is different, however, with those who have to live there. Who knows how Niemoeller himself would be in this case (certainly if he would not succeed in getting a post like that of our Turs, which taking into account Niemoeller's courageous attitude during the Hitler regime sounds quite incredible) - would not he himself ask for permission to leave for the dreadful Spain? But in vain. The curtain is lifted but to the "dear" guests, not to the "free" citizens.

Niemoeller was invited to the United States by the Florida Chain of Missionary Assemblies, but will undertake a continent-wide speaking tour. He really can afford that, for he speaks English fluently.

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A WORK FOR REFUGEES

The Lutheran World Federation established a special printing press at Munich, 1949, for the needs of the Service to Refugees. Up to the end of the last year in this printing press there were published over three million pages of printed matter of different kinds. They have been printed in the Latvian, English, Estonian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian and German languages. By the way, in this printing press there was also printed that collection of hymns in several languages which has been used for the services held in the church of Grohn.

INNOVATIONS IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THE AUSTRIAN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Austrian women voted for the first time in the elections for parochial councils only at the end of the last year. These elections were carried out according to the new constitution of the Austrian Lutheran Church accpeted in 1949, that gives women the right to vote and to be elected to the local councils and assemblies. Another innovation is that the new constitution provides the privilege of voting to only those members of the parish - both men and women - who have confessed their willingness to assume responsibility in the life of the church. By this the goal is that the church council consists of persons who actively participate in worship and the life of the church.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTIONS IN THE EASTERN ZONE OF GERMANY

In spite of the oppression of the totalitarian force, still 85% Lutheran children have their religious lessons in the Eastern Zone of Germany, though the statistics show that the percentage has dropped to 27 in the higher grades. The religious instructions in the Eastern Zone still are taught by the Church and in this task still are employed 10,000 persons, both clergymen and laymen.

L.R.S. HAS HELPED 30,647 DP'S

Up to December 31 last year the Lutheran Resettlement Service has helped 30,647 DP's to come over to the U.S.A. This, however, is not the final number, for there should be added a couple hundred DP's who received their visas in the last days of December and arrived in the U.S.A. at the beginning of this year.

A CROSS TO THE LUTHERANS OF THE U.S.A.

As a token of gratitude and Christian fellowship the Lutherans of the U.S.A. have received from the Lutherans of the Eastern Zone of Germany a cross carved of the native wood of Silesia, the eastern-most part of Germany.

THE AMERICAN CHURCH GIVING

Total giving to all American churches is now about $2 billion a year. Among Protestants the average annual offering is $32.33, among Lutherans - $45; they however are surpassed by some other denominations remarkably. The average offerings of the Free Methodists to their church amount to $163.76 and the Seventh Day Adventists, $143.11 per member.

ARAB AND KOREAN REFUGEES

There are about 800,000 Arab refugees in Palestine, a heritage of the recent Jewish and Arab conflict. As the result of the Korean war there are about 5 million DP's in Korea. American churches gathered relief funds last month for these homeless people.

ALSO A WAY OF HELPING THE CHURCH

In the state of Ohio a pupil, ten years old, during two years gather two tons of scrap paper. The received money he offered to his church for home missions. An example for the youngsters.

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For information write to the above address,
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